SOCIALIST
REPUBLICS
of the Soviet Union

Azerbaijan

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Azerbaijan

SOCIALIST REPUBLICS of the Soviet Union

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CONTENTS

THE MAIN FACTS IN BRIEF 5
WE INTRODUCE: AZERBAIJAN 7
A SOVEREIGN AND MULTINATIONAL STATE 11
BAKU—ANCIENT AND EVER YOUNG 14
Baku's Acropolis 14
A Modern City and its Problems 16
Remembered Forever 18
THE INDUSTRIAL FACE OF AZERBAIJAN 21
Legendary Figures 23
A Glimpse into the Future 26
MASTERS OF THEIR LAND 31
May the Mountain of Cotton Rise to the Skies! ... 33
Saghi, a Glass of Wine! 34
Vegetables for the Cities 35
Science to the Aid 36
Closing the Gap between Town and Country 37
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION—WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY? 39
THE WOMEN OF AZERBAIJAN 44
RELIGION IN AZERBAIJAN 49
SCIENCE AND CULTURE: PAST TRADITIONS AND THE PRESENT 55
Reviewing the Past 56
From the Past to the Present 57
From Nizami to Vurgun 59
The World of National Music 62
Craftsmen 64
He Paints the Working Man 66
THE LAST WORD 68

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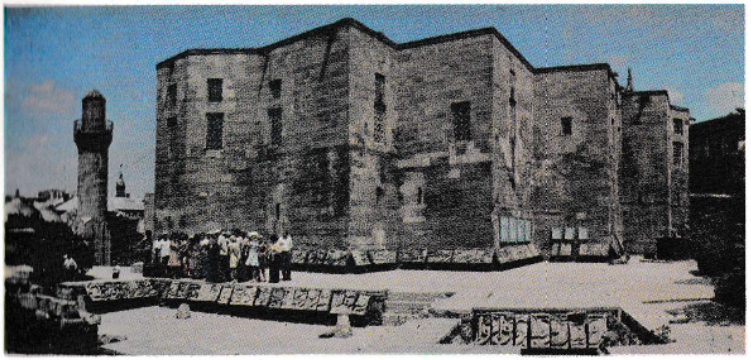
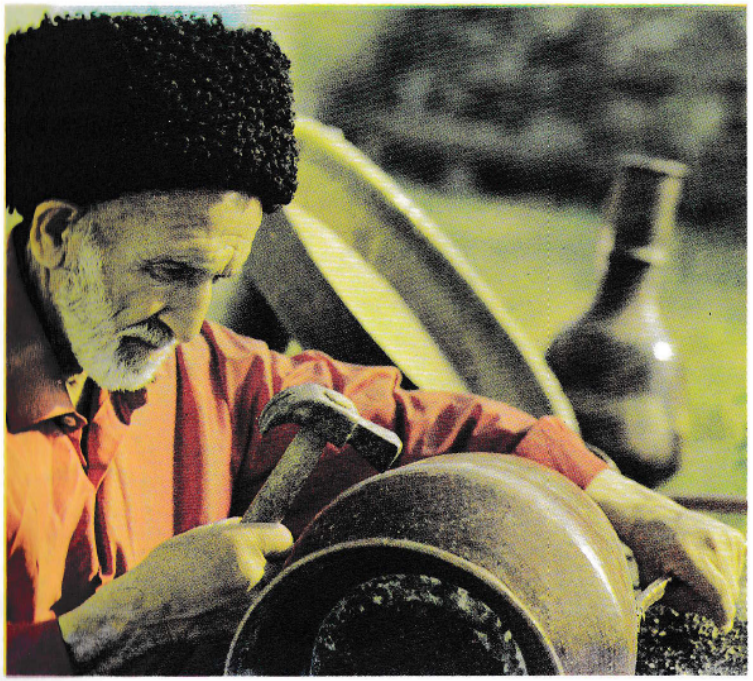
THE MAIN FACTS IN BRIEF

NAME	— Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.
DATE OF BIRTH	— April 28, 1920. Part of the Transcaucasian Federation from 1922 to 1936. A Union republic since December 5, 1936.
POPULATION	— Azerbaijanis, Russians, Armenians, Georgians, Jews, Tatars, and other nationalities. Total: 6,028,000 (1979).
CAPITAL	— Baku.
SUPREME LEGISLATIVE BODY	— Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR.
EXECUTIVE BODY	— Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR.
PARTY LEADERSHIP	— Central Committee of the Communist party of Azerbaijan.
STATE EMBLEM OF THE AZERBAIJAN SSR	— The State Emblem of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic is a hammer and sickle with an oil rig set on the background of the rising sun and framed by a wreath of cotton and ears of wheat, with the inscriptions "Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic" and "Workers of All Countries, Unite!" in the Azerbaijani and Russian languages. In the upper part of the Emblem is a five-pointed star. *From Article 180 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR*
STATE FLAG OF THE AZERBAIJAN SSR	— The State Flag of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic is a rectangular banner consisting of two horizontal bands, the upper one, three-quarters of the total width, being red, and the lower one, one-quarter of the total width, being blue. Near the staff in the left-hand corner of the red band, the flag carries a gold hammer and sickle and a five-pointed red star edged in gold above them. The ratio of the width of the flag to its length is 1:2. *Article 181 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR*

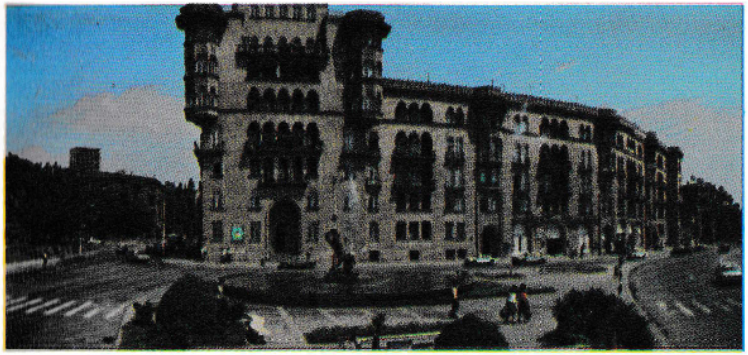
Azerbaijan is an ancient seat of human civilization. Many of the old architectural monuments here have been placed under the protection of the state. This is the Palace of Shirvanshahs built in Baku in the 15th century.

Copper chasing is an ancient craft still practiced in the republic.

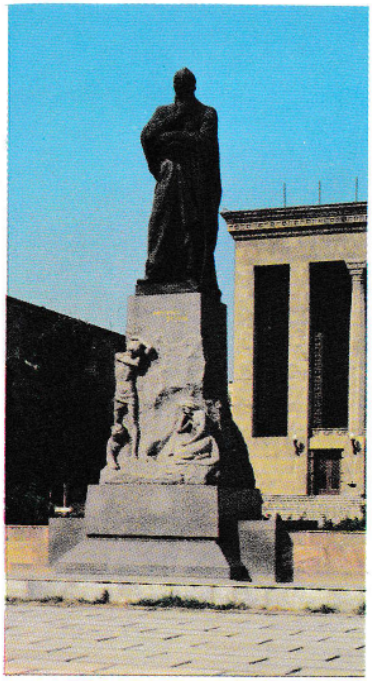




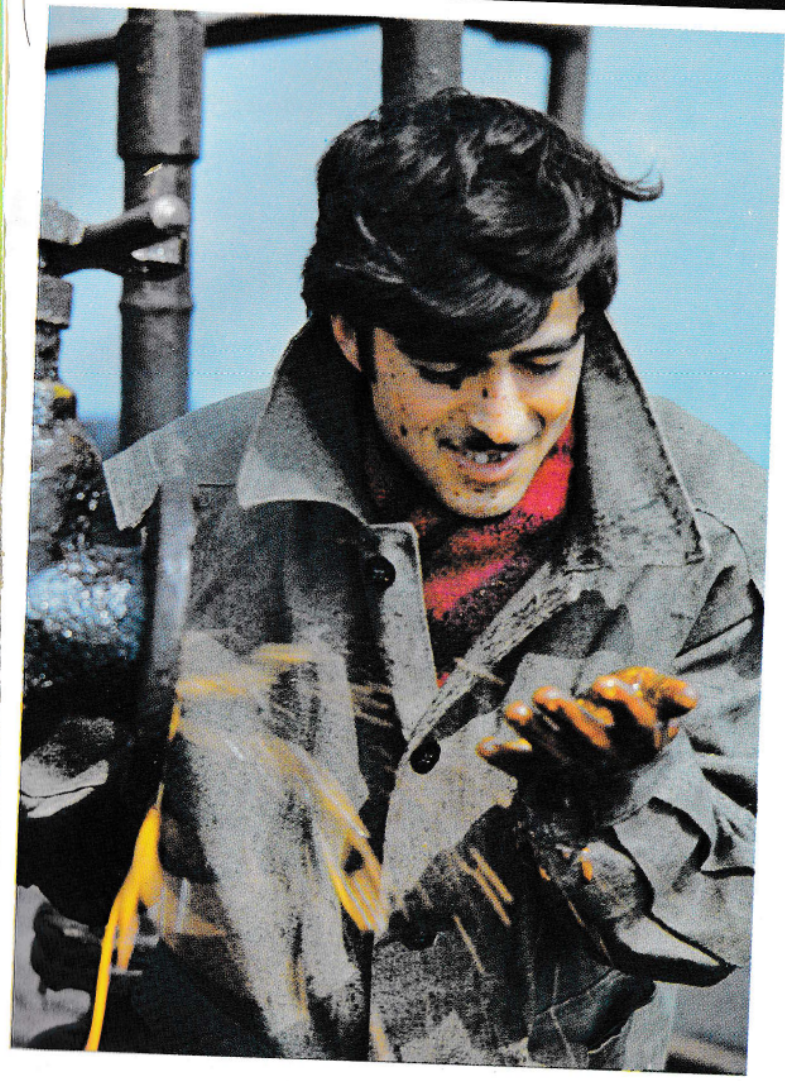
Baku has many interesting buildings, both those which have come down to us from the old days and those erected in modern times. There are also many avenues and parks.

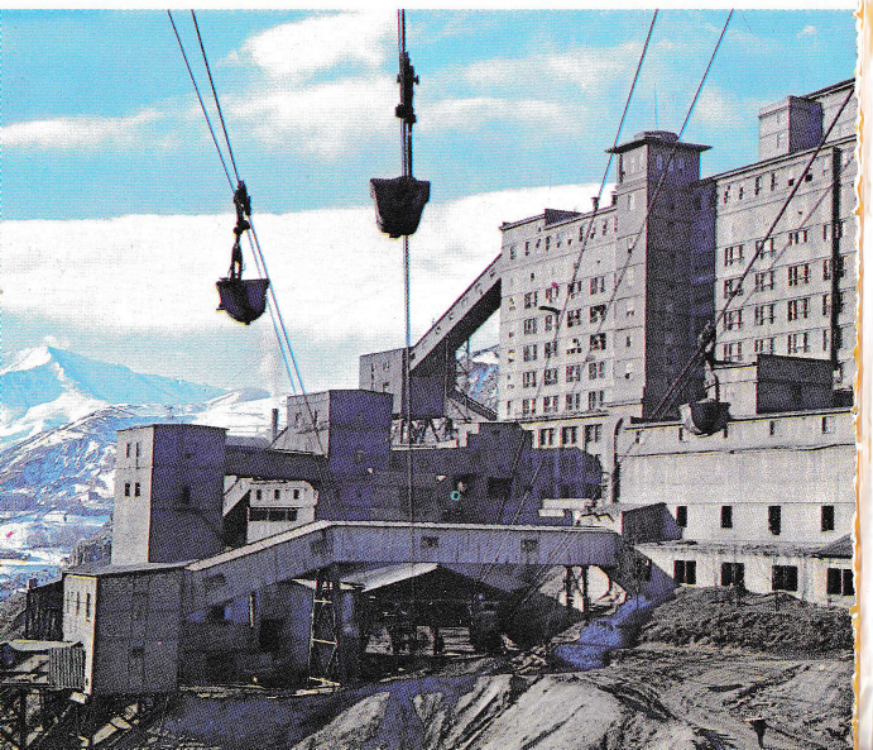


The memorial to the twenty-six Baku Commissars; monuments to the Azerbaijani poet Fizuli who lived in the 16th century, and the world-famous poet and thinker of the 12th century Nizami Gyandjavi; sailing boats in Baku harbour; the Moskva hotel.



The Apsheron Peninsula and the adjacent sea are rich in oil and natural gas. A large oil workers' community, Neftyaniye Kamni, has been built on steel frames out in the sea about 100 km from Apsheron.





The Novo-Bakinski oil-refining plant.

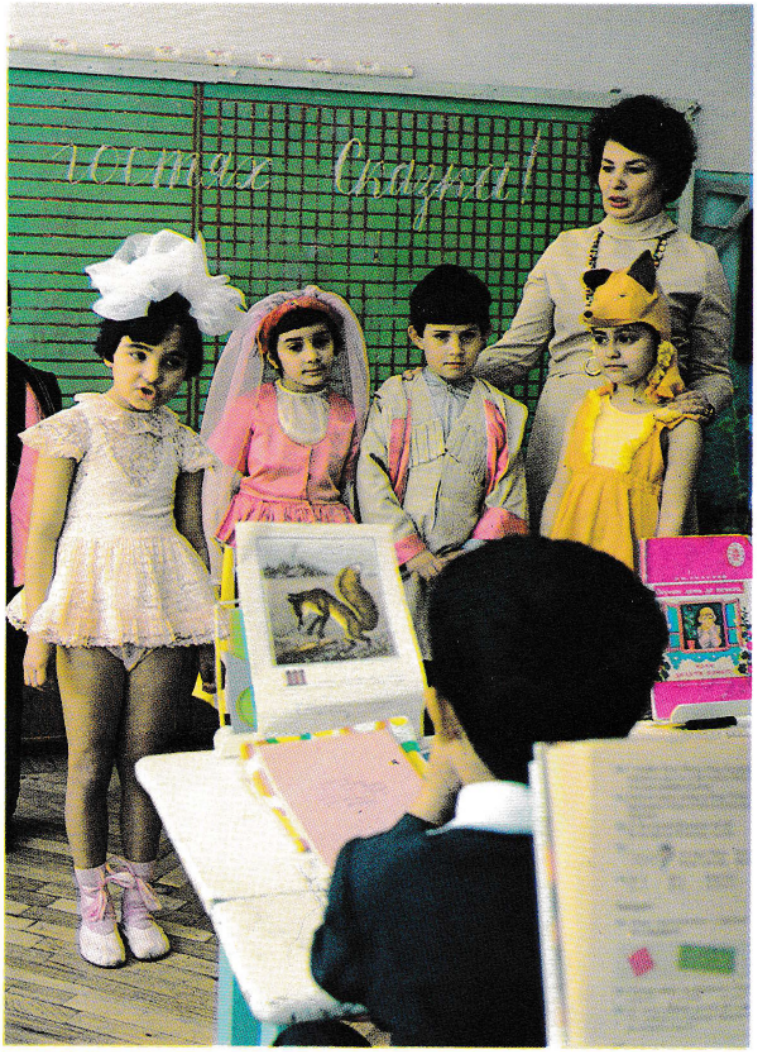
A large ore-dressing plant has been built in the town of Dashkesan, one of Azerbaijan's mining centres.

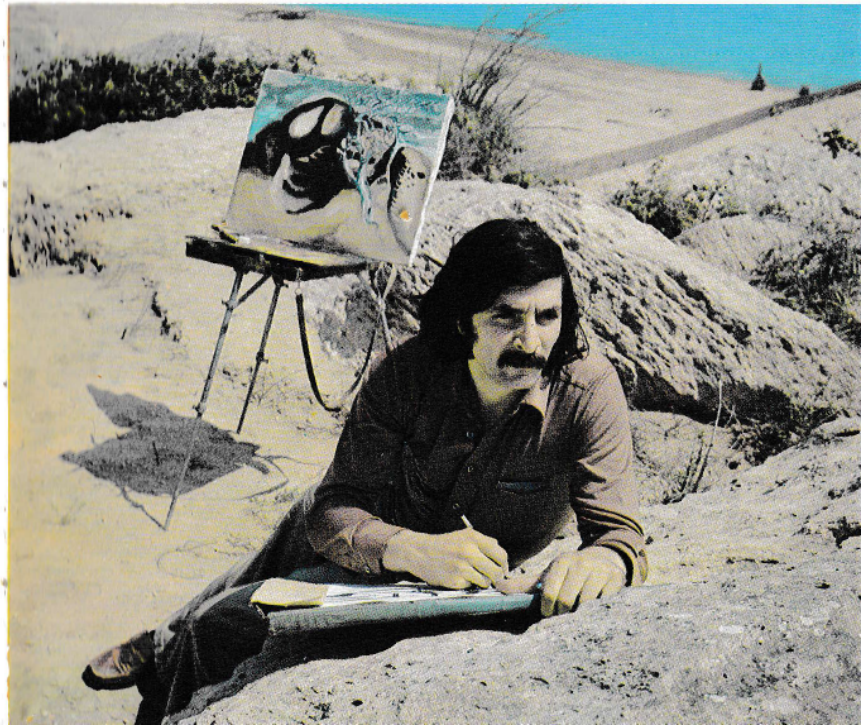
Azerbaijan is famous for its delicious grapes.

Fairytale impersonations at school.

Vibrant and colourful—the dances of Azerbaijan.

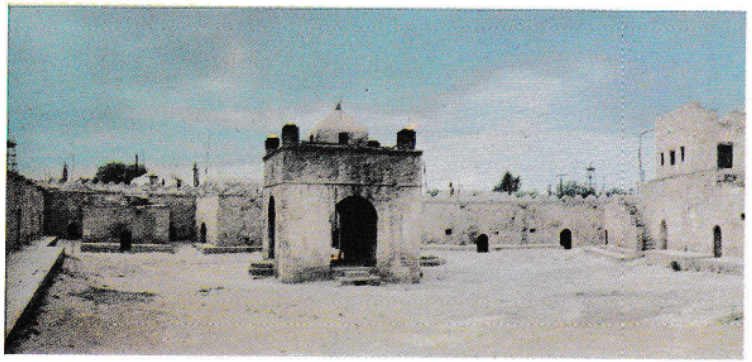
The sharp eye of the artist detects even the most subtle nuances in the beauty of his native land.

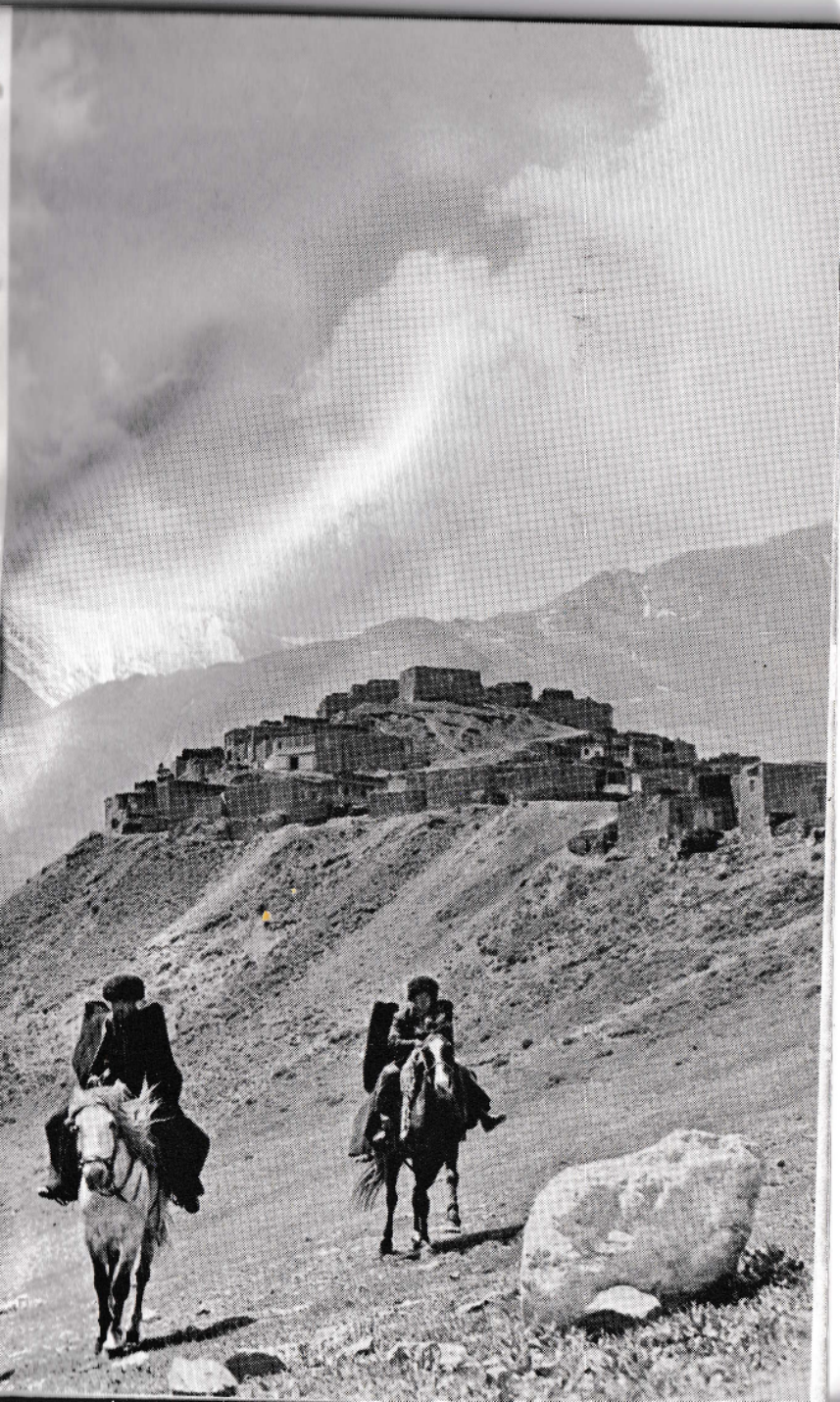




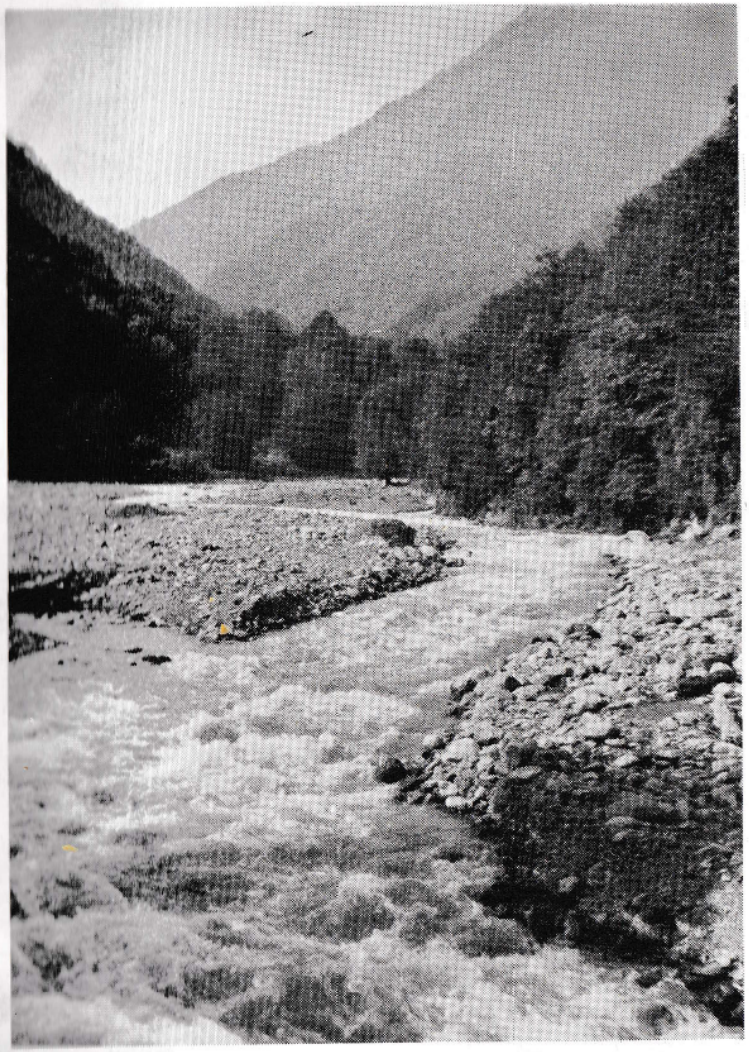
The temple of fire worshippers at Surakhany. This is one of the rare architectural monuments of the 17th-18th centuries.

Baku. The minaret of an old mosque and the Maiden's Tower built in the 12th century (right).





The natural scenery of the republic is very picturesque and varied. Almost all climatic zones are represented here — from highland tundras to the subtropics.



Baku is the fifth largest city in the Soviet Union with a population of over 1.5 million.

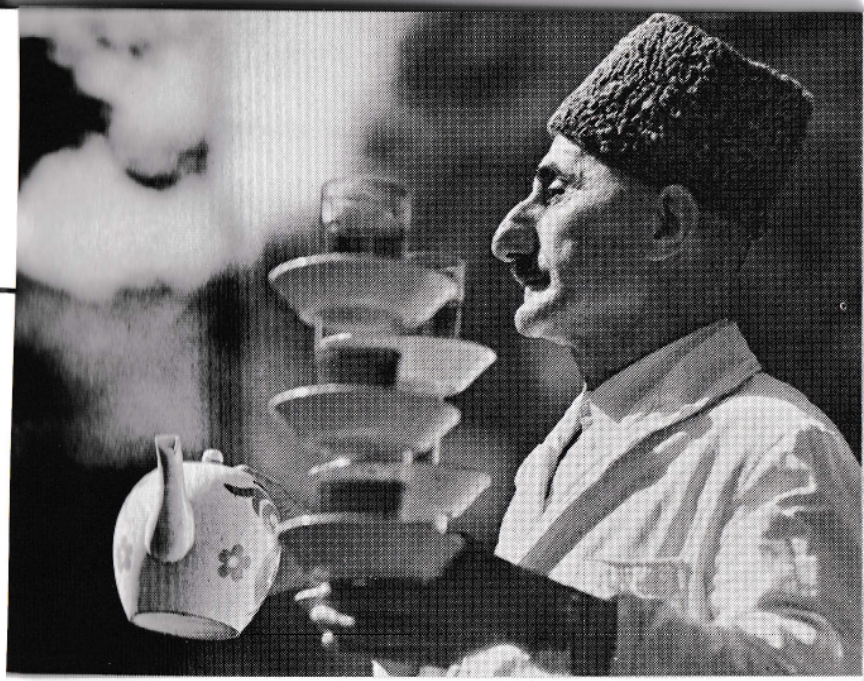
Anyone wishing to take up sport can go to a local sports school or stadium or become a member of a sports club.

Mingechaur. Training for rowing competitions.

The children's autotown in Kirovabad.

Azerbaijan's tea is delicious!

The vacation hotel for workers of the silk-weaving factory in the town of Sheki.



The Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan in session.

Government House in Baku (in the foreground).

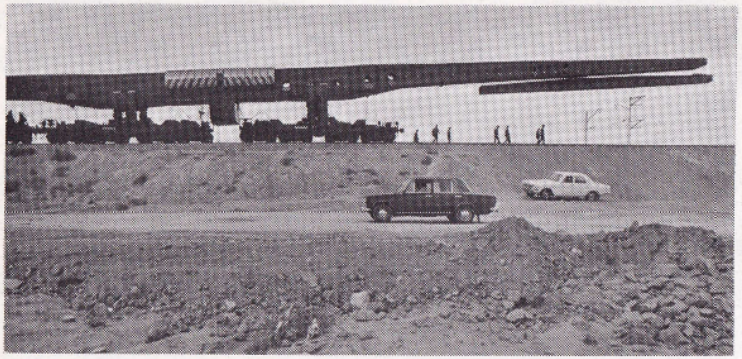
Geydar Aliyev, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Central Committee, with cotton-growers of the Ali-Bairamly district.

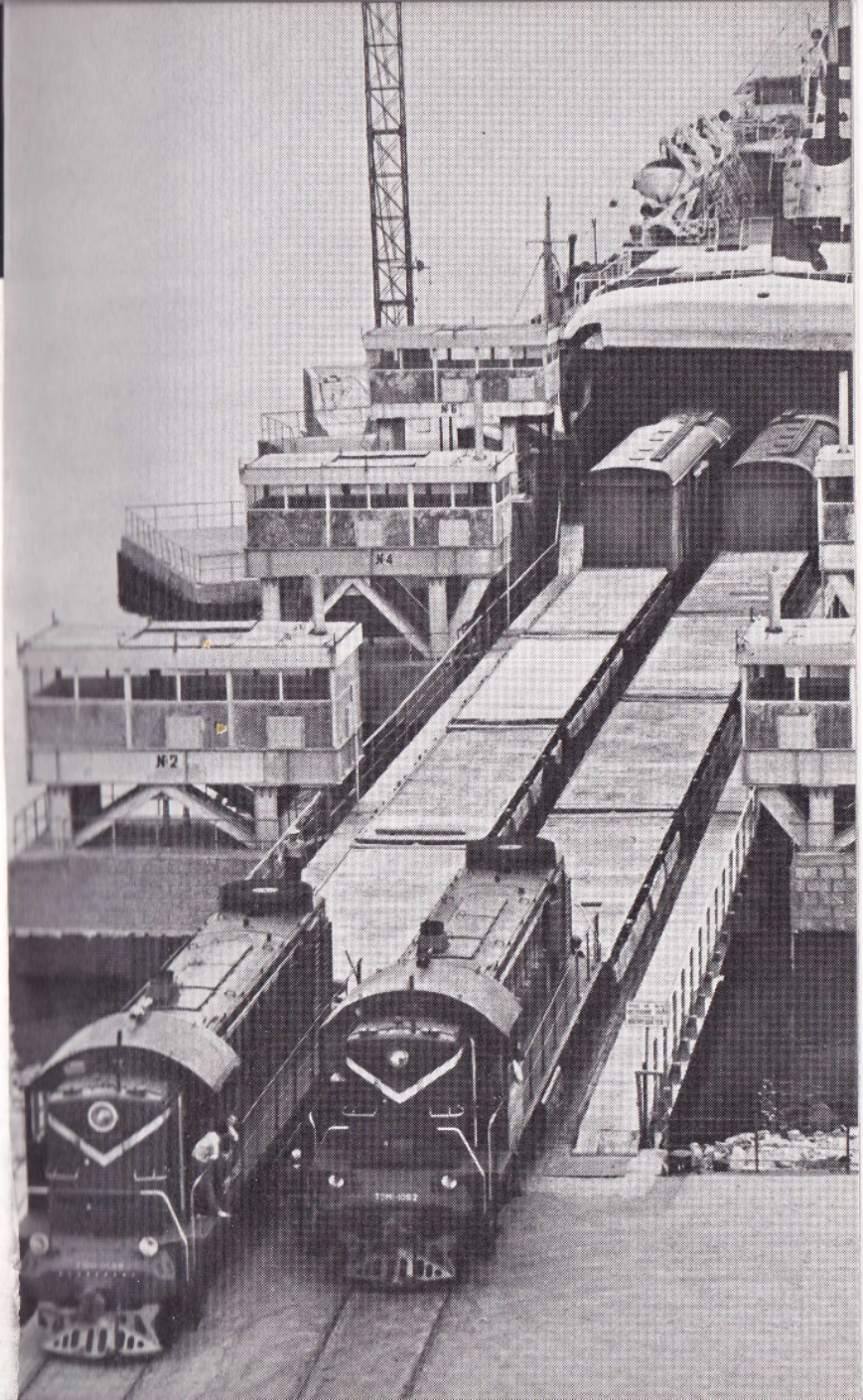
Azerbaijan has many highly developed industries, notable amongst which are oil-extraction and refining, chemical industry, metalmaking, machine-building, and the light and food industries.

Building a new railway line.

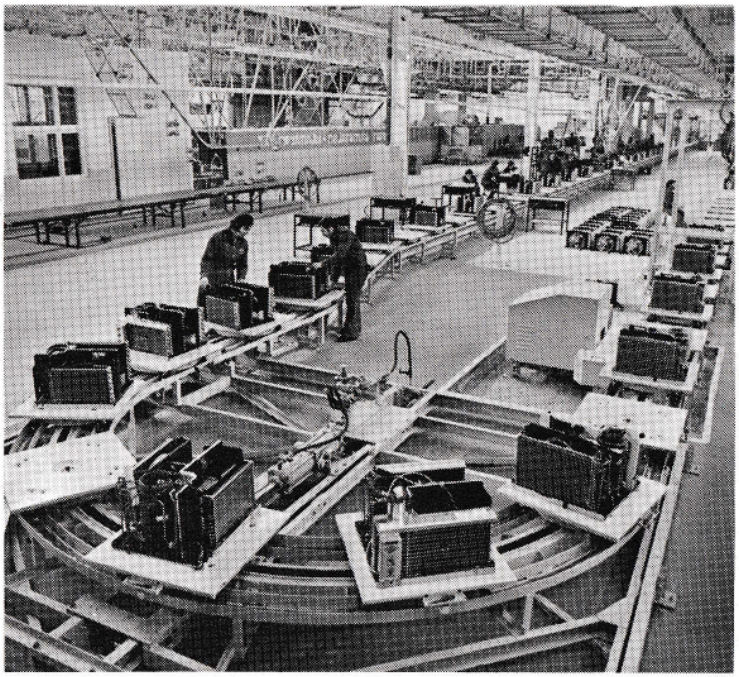
At the pipe-manufacturing plant in Sumgait.

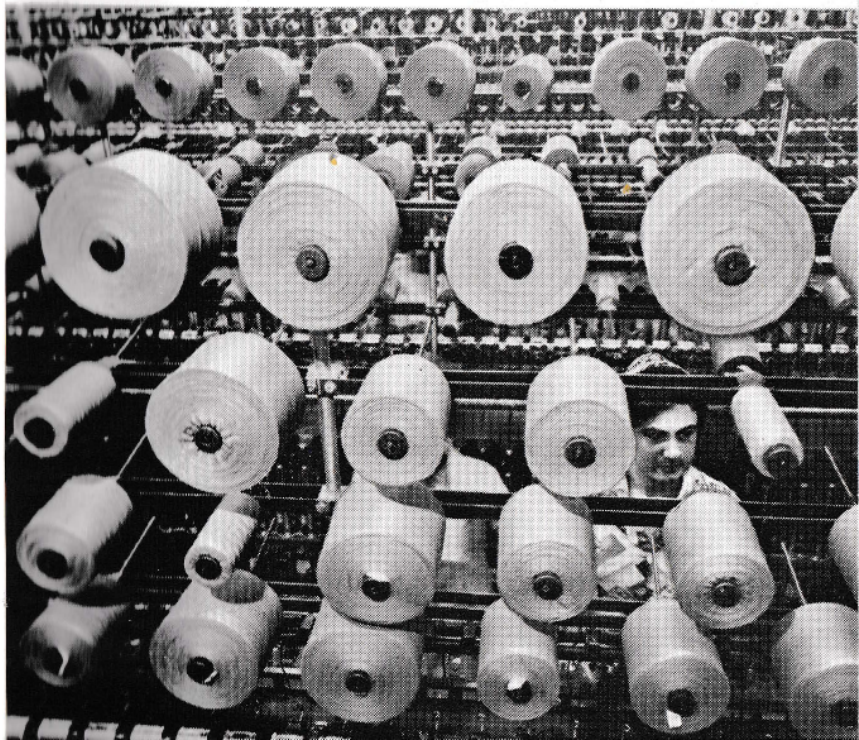
This ferry service connects Transcaucasia with Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan.





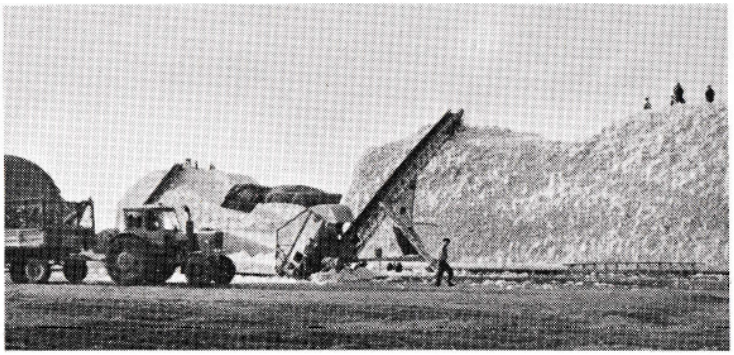
Painters at the porcelain factory in Kirovabad, the biggest in Transcaucasia, discussing new designs for tableware.
Domestic air-conditioners manufactured in Baku are sold in many countries of the world.
The inimitable designs of Azerbaijani carpets.
At the Sumgait textile mill.

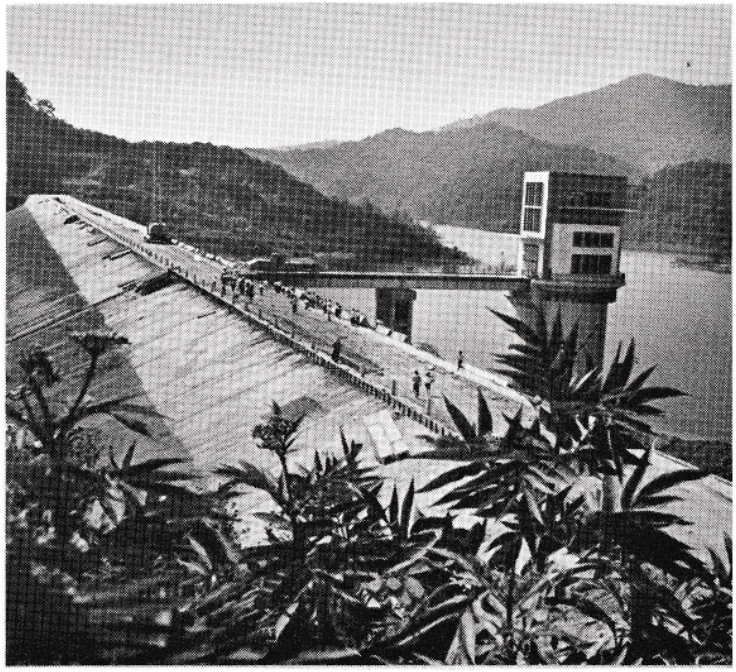




A rose plantation near the town of Zakataly.

Azerbaijani farmers grow cotton and wheat, tend livestock, and grow tea and other crops which thrive on warmth. Irrigation farming is widely developed in the republic.

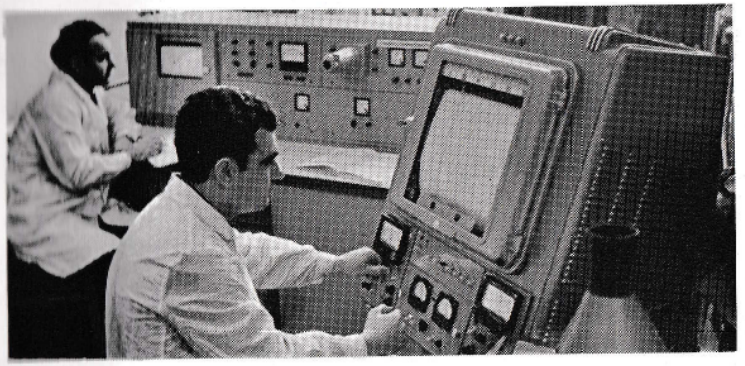


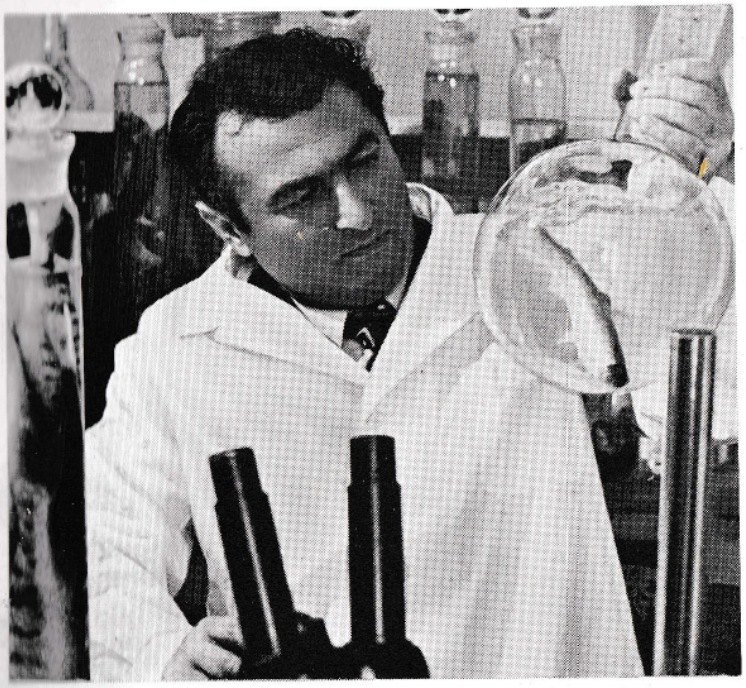


The reflecting telescope at the Shemakha observatory is the second largest in the USSR and in Europe.

In one of the laboratories at the Physics Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan.

Ichthyologist Ramiz Kasimov.

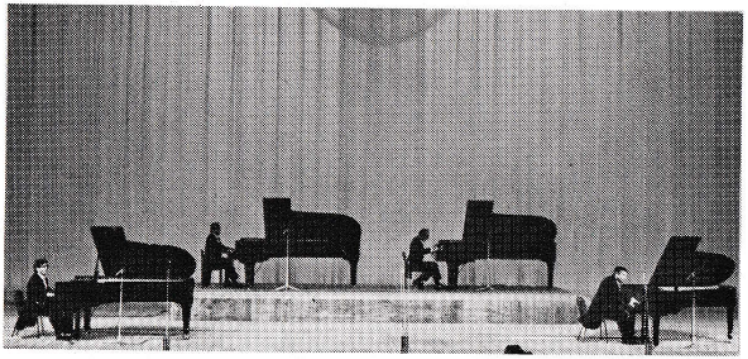




Folk craftsmen create beautiful works of art and also restore ancient monuments.

Craftsman A. Rasulov restoring ornaments at the Sheki Palace.

Classical and folk melodies from different countries, operas and ballets are performed at the concert halls and theatres of Azerbaijan. The most popular of these is the national Opera Theatre. A scene from the ballet "Nasimi" by the composer F. Amirov (on the right).



An interesting exhibition called "The Stone Book" can be found within the walls of the Old Town in Baku. The inscriptions on stones, lifted from the bottom of the Caspian Sea, tell of the old town of Sabail which was flooded by the sea in the Middle Ages.

Tair Salakhov, People's Artist of the USSR.

The Taza-pir mosque in Baku.

Khadji Mir Kazanfar Ibraghimov, Shaykh-ul-Islam of the Moslems of Transcaucasia.

A religious service.

WE INTRODUCE: AZERBAIJAN

Legend has it that once upon a time, long, long ago, lightning hit the sun-scorched land of the Apsheron (the peninsula in the Caspian Sea on which the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, now stands) and a miracle happened—tongues of flame pierced the earth's baked crust and burned day and night. Because of that, the area was called "the Land of Fire".

Azerbaijan has a history which goes as far back as the 2nd millennium B. C. The ancient name of the land was "Atropatene", but it has changed many times since then. The Persians called it "Ader Badagan", and the Arabs—"Ader-baijan", before it took the form we know today—Azerbaijan.

Archeological finds, the remains of ramparts and folk legends tell us of the many conquerors the Azerbaijani soil has known: the Romans, the Persians, the Arabs, the Seljuk Turks and the Tartar hordes. The borders of Tamerlane's empire passed through the area. But Azerbaijan also remembers those who defended it: Babek and Ker-Ogly, Shah Ismail and Fatali-Khan.

The unique geographical position of Azerbaijan—a route centre between Europe and Asia—has always been stressed by historians who cite it as one of the reasons why, from times immemorial, the area has seen so many different cultures, languages, religions, trade routes and wars. A historian taking you through Azerbaijan would have many tales to tell.

So would a geographer. He would probably begin by telling you that Azerbaijan occupies a

territory of 86,000 square kilometres. That is about the size of Belgium, Switzerland or Hungary. In the mountains of Azerbaijan you will find eternal snows, glaciers and Alpine meadows, while in Lenkoran, in the subtropics, you will see plantations of tea and citrus fruit. In the valley of the Kura River (the biggest in the Caucasus) summer temperatures rise as high as those in desert areas, while in the foothills of the Caucasian mountains the frost can be no less bitter than in the Urals.

Should your guide, however, be a biologist, he will make the point that Azerbaijan is the only place in the Soviet Union where you will find a grove of the iron trees, or be able to touch the delicate petals of flowering saffron, or photograph very rare birds.

No biologist will be able to resist the temptation to quote a few statistics.

On the territory of Azerbaijan, he will tell you, there are 99 species of mammals and 350 species of birds. In its lakes and rivers there are 90 species of fish whilst the Caspian Sea that washes its shores is famed for its sturgeon. The republic boasts one of the biggest bird sanctuaries in the world—the Kyzylagach Sanctuary. All in all there are 8 reservations and some 20 smaller nature reserves, occupying more than 5 percent of the total territory. Scientists are engaged in preserving rare species of animals and birds and also in trying to increase their numbers.

Your guide could also be a geologist, since that is a much favoured profession in the republic. He would be sure to tell you that half the elements of the Mendeleyev Periodic Table are to be found there. Archeological finds show that oil and many other minerals have been mined from times immemorial. Stone knives, axes and hammers have been discovered in the quarries near Kirovabad and in the Nakhichevan salt mines. The Kedabek copper mines and the Dashkesan iron ore mines were worked thousands of years ago, as the derelict pits and slag heaps of today testify.

Azerbaijan has two main mining areas—Kirovabad and Nakhichevan. The first produces iron ore, cobalt, alunites, copper, lead, barites and pyrite. The iron-ore deposits in Dashkesan are the most extensive in the Caucasus.

The search for new mineral deposits continues

and, in the last few years alone. geologists have found large deposits of molybdenum, polymetallic ores and copper. The republic is rich in semi-precious and decorative stones, such as agate, jasper, chalcedony, serpentine and marble.

The republic possesses many of nature's riches, including many different mineral waters. In fact, Azerbaijan is one of the most important places in the USSR for mineral springs.

Azerbaijan is so far the only place in the world where deposits of naphtalan—a medicinal liquid similar to oil—have been discovered. The first mention of its miraculous healing properties is to be found in the works of a great Azerbaijani poet of the 12th century, Nizami Gyandjavi.

The town of Naphtalan has grown up in the vicinity of the naphtalan deposits and its sanatorium today enjoys nationwide fame. Scientists have developed methods for producing medicines based on naphtalan, with great curative properties for an impressively wide range of ailments: diseases of the joints, burns, frostbites, and even thrombophlebitis.

A striking illustration of the effectiveness of naphtalan treatment is provided by the unique "Museum of Crutches" that has sprung up in the resort as people cured of polyarthritis have left their crutches, sticks and other walking aids there. Each year brings numerous additions to the collection, as well as letters of gratitude from people who travelled from all parts of the Soviet Union for a cure.

One other profession that might offer a guide is gerontology, since Azerbaijan is called the land of longevity. It has more centenarians than any other place in the world—49 per 100,000 of its population.

Most of the centenarians live in the Talysh Mountains in the Lerik District. The legendary old men of the world—Makhmud Eyvazov, Shirali Muslimov and Medjid Agayev, who lived respectively for 156, 167 and 144 years—all came from this area which is a unique natural laboratory for gerontologists. For journalists it is probably the only place on earth where they can meet contemporaries of Garibaldi or Fyodor Dostoevsky.

Those would be the specialized guides, although a person of any profession or any Soviet nationality could guide you through Azerbaijan. That is no

exaggeration, since people of many nationalities live in the republic, and any of them would be proud to escort you on a tour. Their pride in their land is very great, as anyone who has visited the republic would testify. If you cannot, however, manage a visit, then the next best thing is to get to know Azerbaijan through this book.

A SOVEREIGN AND MULTINATIONAL STATE

"A Union Republic is a sovereign Soviet socialist state that has united with other Soviet Republics in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

... A Union Republic exercises independent authority on its territory."

(From Article 76 of the Constitution of the USSR)

"Citizens of the Azerbaijan SSR of different races and nationalities have equal rights."

(From Article 34 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR)

"There is no and cannot be spiritual rapprochement between Turkmen and Letts, Azerbaijanis and Moldavians, Tajiks and Koreans." This was the verdict of the emigré journal *Azerbaijan* published in Turkey. It maintained that all that existed was "Russification," using this word to describe the rapprochement and internationalization of nationalities and ethnic groups in the Soviet Union. This definition was also applied to the relationship between the Azerbaijani majority and the numerous ethnic groups living within the republic.

Hence, the conclusion that Russification is the essence of the nationalities policy in the USSR, and that its philosophy is based on simple arithmetic: the biggest nation suppresses all others, while the smaller ones suppress even smaller ones, and this continues down the scale to the relations between two individuals. Antagonism between them, it is maintained, is quite natural should they belong to different nationalities.

How very far the real relations existing between the different nationalities in the USSR are from this model can be illustrated in any of the 15 Union republics. Azerbaijan is a perfect

example. Its six-million population is not made up exclusively of Azerbaijanis. There are also Russians, Armenians, Georgians, Lezgins, Jews, Tatars, Ukrainians, Kurds, Tats and Tzakhurs—all in all, more than 70 different nationalities.

This Babylonian mixture of languages, customs and traditions was the bane of Azerbaijan before the revolution. The Tsarist authorities used it to establish their domination in the semi-colonial, but naturally rich, outlying areas of their Empire. In Azerbaijan strife was constantly fostered and maintained between Moslems and Christians, with the blood of both flowing freely.

In 1920, the equality of all nationalities was established in Azerbaijan, both constitutionally and in fact, thus leading to the various nationalities drawing closer together. When we say that illiteracy in Azerbaijan was wiped out in the thirties, that applies to all the nationalities inhabiting the republic. When we say that Soviet Azerbaijan has grown from the backward, outlying area of the Russian Empire it used to be, into a republic with highly-developed industry and agriculture, we know that all the nationalities in Azerbaijan contributed and that it is their joint achievement.

The growth of a national identity found amongst all nationalities inhabiting the USSR, including of course Azerbaijan, is a continuous process. It is, perhaps, the smaller ethnic groups that it has benefitted most. In Azerbaijan, for instance, there are two small ethnic groups—the Udins who number only 7,000 and the Tzakhurs whose number is 10,000. Traditionally they are cattle-breeders and farmers and this has not changed today. What has changed is that illiteracy has been eliminated. Moreover, these peoples have produced agronomists, zootechnicians, doctors, engineers and scientists. They no longer live strictly in one area, but have spread throughout Azerbaijan and beyond. They need fear no language barrier, for most of them speak Azerbaijani and Russian in addition to their own language.

This multinationality is found in all spheres of the republic's life. The vast majority of people in Azerbaijan find their colleagues at work are of various nationalities. The number of mixed marriages is growing, rising from 9 to 18 percent of the total in

the past twenty years. Sociologists note that it is in such families that the progressive trends of the development of Soviet society—democratism, equality and respect for national traditions and customs—are most clearly seen.

From the very first days of its existence, the Soviet state has based its nationalities policy on the equality and sovereignty of people, the abolition of all racial, national and religious privileges and restrictions, and the free development of all nations and national minorities.

Soviet government brought the Azerbaijani people genuine social and national emancipation, it unleashed their potential, and laid the foundation for Azerbaijan Soviet national statehood.

An equal among equals, the Azerbaijan SSR is a sovereign state. The unification of the socialist republics into a single union—the USSR—expressed the wishes of the people and was a purely voluntary act. It was prompted by the common interests of the Soviet republics and the tasks they shared in the building of socialism and communism.

Azerbaijan's sovereignty was given legal enactment in the Constitution of the republic and the Constitution of the USSR. Azerbaijan has its own system of supreme governmental bodies.

Soviet government is the government of the entire people. There are representatives of nine nationalities among the 400 deputies of the Azerbaijan SSR Supreme Soviet, and even more in the local Soviets—representatives of over 30 nationalities that live within the republic. As for the social structure of the Soviets, they include people from all walks of life—workers, cooperative farmers and intellectuals.

First Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Central Committee and Alternate Member of the Politbureau of the CC CPSU, Geydar Aliyev, underlined in one of his speeches: "In the friendly family of the peoples of the USSR, the Azerbaijani people have found true happiness. Our people, under the leadership of the Party and with the disinterested help of the great Russian people and all other peoples of the country, have made glorious progress from age-old backwardness to the heights of social progress."

BAKU—ANCIENT AND EVER YOUNG

The capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, with a population of almost 1.6 million, is the fifth largest city in the USSR, and a major administrative, scientific and cultural centre. It boasts well-developed oil-mining, refining and petrochemical industries, and its port has the biggest internal cargo turnover in the USSR.

The older a city the more legends and stories about the origin of its name. Most people, however, prefer the version that Baku means a "city of winds".

Indeed, winds have welcomed and seen off travellers in all ages who came to the Apsheron Peninsula on which Baku is situated. They have not stopped blowing in our times. There is the warm wind from the south—"ghilawar", and the bitterly cold wind from the north—"khazri". The people of Baku have learnt to live with the wind.

Baku's Acropolis

Should you chance to arrive in Baku on a day when one of the winds is blowing, it is best to begin the tour of the city from its fortress. The wind finds it hard to penetrate the labyrinth of narrow streets and alleys of the old town, so you can roam through them in comparative comfort, making a visit to the palace of the ancient rulers of Azerbaijan, the shirvanshahs, and stopping to admire the perfect lines of the famous Maiden's Tower.

Legend has it that one of the city's rulers built the tower right on the seashore for his beloved. Unfortunately, the girl could not return his passion and preferred throwing herself in the sea to his love. That is the legend, but archeologists and historians prefer the more mundane explanation that the tower derived its name from its inaccessibility. And that perhaps is the more correct version of the origin of the 12th-century tower's name.

The sea has long receded from the tower, but this has not made it any less striking or beautiful. Today, too, it remains a favourite haunt of young lovers, and in the daytime there are endless streams of tourists with cameras and artists with easels. Incidentally, the first Azerbaijan ballet, with music written by composer Afrasiyab Badalbeyli, was based on the legend of the Maiden's Tower.

For those who love ancient architecture, the fortress is a paradise with its unique monuments of Azerbaijani architecture of the Middle Ages: the minarets of the mosques reaching to the skies, the caravansaries, the ancient granite courthouse—Divan-khaneh, the mausoleum of the famous mathematician and astronomer, Seyid Yakhya Bakuwi. These are all the works of the Azerbaijani architects Adjemi ibn-Abubakr, Asir Ali and others who also built many of the other treasures of the East—mosques and palaces in Istanbul, Samarkand, Bukhara, Meshkhed and the famous Taj Mahal in India. The people of Baku quite rightly speak of their old town as the Baku Acropolis.

The fortress is also memorable for its flat-roofed houses, its balconies and verandas that overhang the narrow streets, almost forming an arch. People can greet their neighbours across the road by a handshake without bothering to go out.

The fortress is now being restored and the surrounding area is being cleared of dilapidated buildings that are of no historical interest. At the same time, craft shops, artists' studios and cafes are being built in the style of past ages. The people who have lived in the houses marked for demolition are provided with flats in the new districts of Baku.

A Modern City and Its Problems

There is probably something to be said for comparing Baku with Naples, for there are the same white-stone palaces, the same blue waters and the same brilliant sunshine.

At the far end of the Baku Bay you can see the silhouettes of the oil refineries of the "Black City". It is true that the "Black City" as such no longer exists—only the name remains, as a reminder of the days when the oil boom hit the Apsheron Peninsula. At that time, a feverish exploitation of the oil fields began on the outskirts of Baku, and many refineries and oil reservoirs were built. Maxim Gorky described the areas as a brilliant picture of dismal hell.

Like many other travellers who visited Baku at the beginning of the century, the great writer was struck by the absence of greenery in the streets and by the thick smog that hung over the city covering buildings and everything else with grime.

Only sixty years separate the Baku of today from that picture. All this time people have worked to improve and extend the city. New residential areas, administrative and scientific centres, and an industrial belt were planned by a new generation of architects, by people like Mikail Useinov, People's Artist of the USSR, member of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences. He designed the building of the Academy of Sciences, the Lenin Museum, the Nizami Literary Museum, the Azerbaijan Drama Theatre—buildings which have become the pride of the capital. Few people know Baku better or have a closer affinity with its history than Mikail Useinov.

"I have always believed," Useinov once said, "that a city's architecture should reflect both national architectural traditions and the history of the people. In that respect Baku has been lucky, for its magnificent monuments of medieval Azerbaijani architecture have been preserved."

Modern techniques—aluminium, glass and concrete, with clear-cut planning—are also part and parcel of Baku. Understandably, the Oriental traveller in Baku sees it as a European city, while the Westerner is charmed by its Oriental aspect.

And what about the population of Baku—the one

and a half million—for whom it is home? How do they feel?

"The city's problems," Mikail Useinov said, "differ little from those of any other big city. There is the same need to provide homes for the rapidly growing population, to improve public transport and to protect the environment. In other words, all these are problems posed by urbanization."

Baku was built in an arid area and that presents a problem of water supplies. At the beginning of the century the population relied on wells with slightly salty water. Fresh water used to be delivered by boat from the Volga and the Kura, which naturally made it very expensive. Somewhat later water was piped from the mountain springs. But that proved only a temporary solution, since the city's rapidly growing demands outstripped supply. The government then drew up plans that would ensure Baku's water supply for a long time ahead. It was decided to build pipelines in 1970-1980 that would bring the waters of the Kura to Baku. Two of them are already functioning, so that now each inhabitant of Baku can rely on more than 300 litres of water a day. The new pipelines to be commissioned in the 11th five-year plan period (1981-1985) will ensure the city an adequate water supply up to the year 2000.

"But housing still remains our main problem," continued Mikail Useinov. "Like all Soviet cities Baku is developing strictly according to its Master Plan. The present plan is our third, the previous two having already been completed. The bulk of the housing in the city was built in Soviet years.

Under the 10th five-year plan (1976-1980), the population was provided with more than 100,000 new flats, the equivalent of several big residential districts and satellite towns, with a population of about 200,000.

If you consider the figures alone, then Baku is building a lot. But new homes are still needed. For one thing, people's expectations are greater. Having a flat is no longer enough—it must be spacious, laid out well and have all modern conveniences. That kind of construction requires greater investments than in the past. People are also demanding better quality and a better finish. Quite naturally, all the

demands for new flats cannot be met quickly, so the problem of housing still remains.

The outstanding Soviet poet, Vladimir Mayakovsky, visited Baku in the first years of Soviet government and noted in one of his poems that there were only two or three green leaves in the whole of Baku. The air was so saturated with gas and oil vapour that plants and trees could not survive. The very idea of greenery among the oil derricks and refineries seemed odd.

At that time oil took precedence over everything else. The country needed it badly and Baku was then the main supplier. There came a day when pollution reached threatening proportions and it became clear that priorities had been wrong. People realized that trees and shrubs are not only a pleasant sight, but are also a natural filter and producer of oxygen. So Baku got down to turning the city into a garden.

Things have changed radically in the past thirty years. Instead of the two or three patches of greenery once visible when approaching Baku by plane, today the whole city seems to be covered in green. In the 10th five-year plan period alone, the area under greenery has doubled, and a green belt has been put up around the city. Today there are 40 square metres of greenery for each head of population, and there will be still more in the future.

The problems of public transport are being resolved no less successfully. Today Baku offers its people every kind of transport imaginable—from exotic phaetons to the underground railway (metro) which covers the distance from the centre to the industrial suburbs in a matter of minutes. Traditionally, the underground stations in the Soviet Union are decorative as well as functional.

"It was a great pleasure," concluded Mikail Useinov, "to be involved in designing the Baku metro, the architecture of which includes many elements of our national traditions and is combined with modern techniques."

Remembered Forever

Should you ever visit Baku make a point of riding in its metro trains. It too is an excellent guide. Each of the stations reflects a page of history: "April 28"—the day Soviet government came to Azerbaijan, and "26 Baku Commissars"—revolutionary heroes.

Mention has already been made of the fires of Azerbaijan. One of them is man-made—the eternal flame at the grave of the 26 Baku Commissars, one of the most sacred places in the city. Children come to this spot on the Square of the Commissars before joining the Young Pioneer organization and teenagers before joining the Young Communist League (Komsomol). Veterans of the revolution also make frequent pilgrimages there and it is, of course, a must for all visitors to Baku.

Who were the 26 Commissars? They were the members of the Baku Council of People's Commissars set up in April 1918, as the first Soviet government body in Azerbaijan. The first decree passed by the Council was that nationalizing the oil industry.

In its appeal to the people, the Council pointed out: "The destiny of Russia depends on the quantity of oil Baku can supply. Without fuel, without our mazout, and without lubricating oil, the factories of Moscow, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Petrograd and the Volga regions cannot start working, the villages cannot be supplied with cotton fabrics, nails and farm implements, the grain cannot be moved from the fields to the famine areas, the railways cannot be made to work, and our revolutionary Red Army cannot be moved speedily to the defence of the republic..." Such was the logic of the revolution.

In the summer of 1918, the position of Soviet government in Baku deteriorated as anti-Soviet elements in the city stepped up their activities. Turkish and German invading forces were trying desperately to reach the oil-rich area, but Soviet Russia was at that time unable to offer effective help to Baku, as it was locked in battle with interventionist forces and struggling to combat counterrevolution. Because of this, Soviet government in Baku was temporarily crushed on July 31, 1918. The city was first occupied by British forces and then by Turkish. The invaders and representatives of the local bourgeois nationalist party—the Musavatists—unleashed a regime of bloody terror. They plundered national wealth and harshly repressed the revolutionary workers and peasants. On September 20, 1918,

the 26 Baku Commissars were taken to the Transcaspian desert and shot. Later, Sergo Ordjonikidze, one of the leaders of the Soviet state, wrote about the Commissars:

"The leaders of the Baku proletariat made no differentiation in their lifetime between workers of different nationalities, and in death, too, they carried on the great idea of international peace and solidarity, as they were laid to rest in a common grave. The live Stepans, Alyoshas, Vanyas, Meshadibeks, who make up the Baku proletariat, proudly carry on the cause of their leaders."

During the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union against nazism (1941-1945), hundreds of thousands of the sons and daughters of Azerbaijan worked day and night in the oilfields and in factories to keep the front supplied with fuel, lubricants, weapons and ammunition. They fought in the trenches together with people of other nationalities inhabiting the USSR.

Time cannot dim the memory of the heroes who fought for the happiness of the people. Their traditions of internationalism are carried on today and developed yet further.

THE INDUSTRIAL FACE OF AZERBAIJAN

"The labour of Soviet people free from exploitation is the source of growth of the nation's wealth, the welfare of the nation and each Soviet person separately."

(From Article 14 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR)

When Soviet power was firmly established in Azerbaijan in 1920, the government of the young republic noted with bitterness that practically everything—from machine tools down to kerosene lamps—had to be imported.

Yet, only just over fifty years later, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan CC and Alternate Member of the Politbureau of the CC CPSU, Geydar Aliyev, was able to announce that "every minute Azerbaijan produces 33 tons of oil, 27,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity, 813 metres of fabrics and 87 pairs of shoes..."

Industry in Azerbaijan is today highly diversified. It includes oil production and refining, chemical and electrical engineering industries, the production of machinery for oil industry, iron-and-steel and non-ferrous metals industry, the manufacture of building materials, and light industry and the food industry. All known natural deposits are today utilized in the national economy, and Azerbaijan now exports more than 350 different products to over 60 countries.

But, in 1920, when Soviet government was established, oil was almost the only natural resource which had been discovered in the area.

For the first Soviet government in Azerbaijan the question "Where to begin?" was anything but academic. They began with the ABC—literally—and got down to eradicating illitera-

cy, to opening general education, trade schools, and technical schools and colleges to train skilled workers, technicians, engineers and teachers. People from all parts of the republic began moving to the capital so that, by 1930, the population of Baku had jumped from the pre-revolutionary figure of 112,000 to half a million. Russian engineers, scientists and skilled workers gave great help to Azerbaijan. Academician Ivan Gubkin and such top experts as Alexander Serebrovski, Sergei Pototski and Yakov Dunin, for example, did much to further the development of its oil and oil refining industries, which played a very important part in strengthening the young republic's entire economy.

Soviet Russia also gave Azerbaijan considerable financial assistance. It sent equipment and moved a number of factories from the central regions to Azerbaijan.

Lenin showed a constant interest in how things were going in Baku, in its development and in the future of Baku oil. In a letter of April 2, 1921, to Alexander Serebrovski, he wrote: "... is there a correct approach in Baku to the question of oil from the standpoint of coordinating the various aspects of the national economy? After all, the territory is very rich: forests, fertile land (given the irrigation), etc. Is it possible to develop the oil industry without developing irrigation and farming around Baku? Is anyone thinking about this and working on it properly?"

Thanks to the help given by the other Soviet republics, Azerbaijan was able to eliminate illiteracy totally in the thirties and to train its own scientists, engineers and geologists. It became possible to consider the development of another industrial area in addition to Baku. The entire country helped. Metalworkers, builders and metallurgists came from Moscow and other industrial centres of the Russian Federation, from the Ukraine, and Byelorussia. A new industrial centre was built up around the city of Kirovabad, which became the second largest administrative and cultural centre after Baku.

Kirovabad, known formerly as Gyandja, is an ancient town—about 1,500 years old. It is known as the birthplace of Nizami, whilst another great poet of the Orient, Mirza Shafi Vazekh, also lived and

worked there. His works were particularly popular in the first half of the 19th century.

In the past 30 years, the town has built as much housing as in all its previous history. Dozens of general education and technical schools have been opened as well as colleges, scientific research and design institutes. The republic's second industrial centre today encompasses dozens of big plants that export their goods to 20 countries. Oil-extracting and oil-refining equipment is sent to the socialist countries. The water metres made in Kirovabad specially for operation in tropics are bought eagerly by firms in Brazil, India, Turkey, Greece and Pakistan, while the carpets from Kirovabad have won prizes at many international fairs.

Legendary Figures

In the postwar years a number of new towns, such as Sumgait, Mingechaur, Dashkesan and Ali Bayramly, appeared on the map of Azerbaijan. Each emerged as a result of the development of a new branch of industry: metalmaking, chemical and power industries. The lives of thousands and probably tens of thousands of people were closely linked with the birth of the new towns. Take the story of Sarvan Salmanov, for instance, a worker who built Mingechaur and the hydroelectric power station next to it.

"The construction of the Mingechaur hydroelectric power station," he said, "and the new power capacities in Armenia and Georgia made it possible to build a single power grid for the entire Transcaucasus. The electricity from my town goes to the mines of Dashkesan and the metalmaking and chemical plants in Kirovabad and Sumgait."

Mingechaur takes its beginning from November 1, 1948, when land surveyors arrived on the banks of the Kura. They were shortly followed by builders who erected a 70-metre dam to form a reservoir more than 80 kilometres long and 14 kilometres wide.

We chose Sarvan Salmanov to tell the story of Mingechaur for a special reason. In 1949, the

outstanding Azerbaijani poet, Samed Vurgun, visited the construction site and was inspired to write a poem about how Sarvan Salmanov, a boy from an Azerbaijani village, went to build a power station on the Kura River, how he met thousands of other lads like himself from Baku, Tbilisi, Yerevan, Moscow and other parts of the Soviet Union. Together they tamed the river and grew up themselves. Today Sarvan Salmanov is a leading engineer at the power station he helped build.

"Any one of our builders," Sarvan remarked, "could have equally well become the hero of the poem."

Nor was he being ostentatiously modest, for many a song has been written about the builders at the construction sites of the five-year plans. And many of them are popular among the people to this day. Take, for instance, the song about the oil worker, Kurban Abbasov, a young man from the "Island of Seven Ships".

When we met him he was a middle-aged man growing bald, with a quiet voice, and wearing a snow-white shirt and a tie. When we saw him, Kurban Abbasov was chief of the Caspian Oil Prospecting Organization. It was only later, when he took us out to sea and we saw him in oilskins, that we noticed how much younger he seemed to look, how broad in the shoulders and how tall he was. There he looked much more like the lad about whom the song was written 35 years ago.

"The sea and the promise of adventure it held," he told us, "had always attracted me. When I finished school in the early postwar years, most of my class went on to college, but I wanted to make the sea my life. So I went to Baku and joined up as an ordinary worker on an oil rig."

He quickly made the grade from worker to drilling foreman. In the fifties, the Azerbaijan government decided to tackle the Caspian Sea oil. An island was formed out of seven sunken ships 100 kilometres from the shore and the first oil prospecting group made it their home.

"My team," Kurban Abbasov said, "drilled the second well. The first oil gushed from the well drilled by my teacher, Mikhail Kaverochkin."

That was the beginning of the famous town on

piles—Neftyaniye Kamni (Oil Rocks). At first there were just a few man-made islands—steel rigs from which the drills operated. Then streets on piles were built to link the isles, and then houses for the workers.

Today, the total length of the "town" is 200 kilometres. The steel island has everything a real town has: five-storey buildings providing accommodation for the oil workers, shops, canteens and even a hothouse. Somebody brought some pigeons along and they have made themselves perfectly at home. Like any other town, Neftyaniye Kamni has its quota of schools and a technical school, a helicopter pad, and even its own newspaper.

In 1951, Kurban Abbasov and several other workers and engineers who were the first to start extracting oil in the Caspian were awarded a State Prize. A year later, Abbasov was made Hero of Socialist Labour, and that was when the song about him was written.

"Working on oil rigs at sea is anything but easy. We used to spend weeks out at sea, working in heavy storms and bitter winds. One night a hurricane swept away several derricks. In the morning two of our comrades—Mikhail Kaverochkin and Suleiman Bagirov—were missing...."

In 1954, Kurban Abbasov was already chief of a section. The management noticed his organizational ability and made him head of one of the departments of the rapidly expanding enterprise.

"I didn't lack experience," Kurban Abbasov recalled, "but I soon realized that experience alone was not enough. I was lucky—a technical vocational school was opened so that workers could study in the evenings. Not that it was easy to get down to textbooks after a full day on the rigs, but I had to keep pace with life. We were getting new equipment, and were drilling at higher speeds and to greater depths. Without the theory there was no forging ahead."

At the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties, several other oil deposits began to be worked in the Caspian. It was therefore decided to set up in Baku an organization to control all oil prospecting at sea and the Azerbaijan government placed Kurban Abbasov at its head.

In keeping with the 10th five-year plan (1976-1980), the intensive development of new Caspian oilfields lying at greater depths was begun.

"The task is made easier for us today", Abbasov told us, "by the availability of various types of oil rigs for use at sea." There are also new methods of prospecting on oil rigs designed jointly by Baku experts and the shipbuilders of Gorky and Astrakhan. A number of oil rigs are operating in the Caspian: the "Apsheron", "Baku", "Azerbaijan", and others. Thanks to them workers are able to go much further afield—right up to the Eastern shores of the Caspian Sea—in the search for oil.

The experience gained in operating sea rigs also led to the use of new methods for deep-sea drilling. Kurban Abbasov made a comparative assessment of the new methods as part of his degree. Without discontinuing his job, he managed to finish the Azerbaijan Oil and Chemical Institute.

The practical and theoretical knowledge of drilling at sea acquired in Azerbaijan will without doubt prove very useful in other parts of the Soviet Union. The Caspian Sea, therefore, is not only an important supplier of oil, but is also the school for all other Soviet off-shore oil workers. New technological ideas and equipment tested in the Caspian will be used widely in exploring for oil on the continental shelf of the Soviet Union.

The Azerbaijani oil workers have not confined their help to their own country—they were also assisting their colleagues in Cuba, Bulgaria and India.

A Glimpse into the Future

When inviting the reader to make a guided tour of the towns and villages of Azerbaijan, we did not think of it being two-dimensional and encompassing both time and space. But that has proved unavoidable. We hope the reader will forgive us that, when we take him through the streets of Baku, or along Neftyaniye Kamni, we first offer a glimpse through the haze of the centuries and then, practically in the same breath, a view of the present and future. That can hardly be avoided, since ours is a story about a republic surging ahead. And what better way for

separating the essential from the less essential than by comparing the present with the past?

For instance, dozens of new plants of different kinds were built in the republic in each five-year plan period. Yet we have spoken chiefly of the Mingechaur hydroelectric power station, Neftyaniye Kamni, Dashkesan, Sumgait and Kirovabad. Why? Not just because they were the biggest construction projects, but also because the power station on the Kura River laid the foundation for Azerbaijan's own power base. Neftyaniye Kamni was a new stage in oil extraction, whilst the pipe-rolling plant in Sumgait marked the birth of a new industry in the republic.

To take another example, in the 9th five-year plan period (1971-1975), 55 major industrial enterprises were built in Azerbaijan. Yet it was generally accepted that the most important and promising one for the republic's economy was the air-conditioner plant in Baku.

Why was this project the most significant? Because a gigantic industrial complex was completed in just two and a half years. Suffice it to say that 130 million roubles (67.5 roubles was worth $100 on January 1st, 1981) was invested in the project.

The investment paid off and now 400,000 air-conditioners are produced each year, increasingly large orders for them are pouring in. The air-conditioners are already being supplied to many of the other Union republics and abroad. The plant has noticeably changed Azerbaijan's economic pattern. The republic is now branching out for the first time into such fields as radio engineering, electronics, precision instrument making and mechanical engineering.

These new trends in Azerbaijan's industry were given full play in the 10th five-year plan. The Chairman of the republic's State Planning Committee, Sabit Abbasaliyev, provided some of the background in an interview we had with him.

Question. Azerbaijan's basic assets today stand at almost 21,500 million roubles. More than half of them are the product of the past nine years. Would it then be correct to say that in 1980 the republic doubled its industrial potential?

Answer. Yes, we could say that, although it was not because the number of factories was doubled, but

rather as a result of the qualitative restructuring of industry.

I often meet foreigners visiting Baku. Usually their questions are confined to the future of the republic's oil industry. That is understandable, since we have been producing oil for 110 years now. There was a time, that was in the 1940s, when Azerbaijan accounted for 70 percent of the total USSR production of oil. That being the case, it was only natural that the oil industry and its ancillary industries were given priority.

Today, our output makes up only 3.5 percent of the national total, since rich oilfields are now being exploited in Tataria, Bashkiria, Siberia and Central Asia. A careful look at the plans for the republic's industrial development will reveal that, although much money is still being invested in the oil industry, big investments are also being made in the new branches: electronics and radio engineering and the construction of plants for producing precision instruments and machinery.

In other words, the oil republic is acquiring a new look.

Q. Does it mean that these structural changes pointed to the exhaustion of oil resources?

A. If we had kept to our traditional orientation on the oil industry then at some time in the future we might have felt uncomfortable for our oil reserves are not unlimited. However, the structural changes in industry should not be confined to this—we have quite enough to keep going at the present level of production for quite a long time ahead.

If we are to be exact, then the structural changes have also affected the oil industry. Two-thirds of the oil now comes from the sea. The piers have been replaced by floating oil rigs and derricks, while underwater pipelines are now replacing tankers on an increasingly large scale. The oil-refining industry is also changing.

So it would be more correct to say that Azerbaijan is acquiring a new industrial profile not because it fears the exhaustion of its oil resources, but rather because of the planned nature of the socialist economy. For obvious reasons, oil dominated everything in the republic, and industry was oil-oriented.

Since Azerbaijan is no longer the only major oil producer in the Soviet Union, there seems little sense in placing oil at the top of its economic development. Hence, the branching out into new fields and the construction of new industries which can be distributed more evenly across the whole republic.

Q. At the Republican Institute of Scientific and Technical Information and Economic Research, we were shown some of the forecasts compiled by demographers and sociologists some ten years ago. At that time they predicted that by the end of the seventies the population of the republic would increase by one million (the last census proved them right) and that the main increase would come from non-industrial areas. On the basis of a survey conducted among Azerbaijan's senior school pupils, the scientists also stated that the younger generation was thinking of its future work in terms of cybernetics, electronics, radio engineering and precision instrument-making. In other words, the professions that today rank as the most prestigious.

Did these forecasts influence the current structural changes in Azerbaijan's industry?

A. That is something I was going to dwell on myself. The State Planning Committee of Azerbaijan could not fail to take the survey into account. That is why a considerable part of new capacities is being established in non-industrial centres. The decisive role is played by the engineering industry, with electronics, precision instrument-making and radio engineering well in the lead. Their share in the republic's total output has risen from 34.8 percent in 1965 to 48.9 percent in 1980, and is continuing to grow.

So the younger generation's wishes in respect to their future vocation have been taken into account. Since 1970, the number of jobs in industry has been increased by 80,000, and most of them are in the engineering industry.

Q. The restructuring of industry in Azerbaijan was completed by the end of 1980. In other words, dozens of major enterprises, hundreds of production lines and factory shops were built under the 10th five-year plan. As a result, all-round social development was accelerated in many towns and villages. An imposing programme for just five years, but it was accomplished. What would

you say was the decisive factor?

A. Undoubtedly the collective aid of all the Union republics. Azerbaijan would never have been able to cope on its own. From all parts of the USSR we have been getting equipment and plant, and specialists have come to work on our new projects. A whole series of scientific research and design institutes are working for us. The economic cooperation of the socialist countries is also important. The German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria are our regular partners. In the 10th five-year plan, the USSR government allocated more money than Azerbaijan spent from 1920 to 1960.

But we have no intention of remaining debtors for long. By making effective use of material resources and by intensifying specialization, Azerbaijan by the end of 1980 more than doubled its contribution of the products of engineering and metalworking, with 35 percent coming from the new plants.

MASTERS OF THEIR LAND

"A programme for the transformation of agricultural labour into a variety of industrial labour is being consistently implemented in Azerbaijan."

(From Article 22 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR)

Azerbaijan, like all mountainous areas, has a shortage of land suitable for farming. For each person engaged in agriculture in the republic there is 2.4 times less farmland than the average for the Soviet Union as a whole. Only 4 million of the total 8.7 million hectares of land in Azerbaijan is cultivated land.

The bulk of the land lies in the valleys of the Kura and Araks rivers. A constant war is waged there between the sun and the water, with the sun always emerging victorious. The numerous small rivers and streams in the valleys are dried out by the sun, the ground cracks and is covered with patches of salt. Hence the joyless statistics: 20 percent of the land is soil of medium salinity, another 20 percent of high salinity and 15 percent—pure saline soil. That adds up to 55 percent of the land whose cultivation requires immense preparation, if it is to produce anything.

Although Azerbaijan has its fair share of glaciers, eternal snow and rapid mountain streams, for many long years they were unable to assuage the thirst of the valleys. Even in the subtropical regions of the republic (on the Southern coast of the Caspian Sea near the Talysh Mountains), practically all crops require irrigation since the bulk of the rainfall comes in the autumn and winter.

Tractors were unknown to the peasants of Azerbaijan before the revolution. They used the same wooden plough as their forefathers and

the same sickles to bring in the harvest. So it is hardly surprising that even in good years they harvested a mere 0.58 tons of wheat or 0.62 tons of potatoes per hectare. It had been the age-old dream of the Azerbaijan peasant to give his land all the water it needed.

The first step in this direction was taken on May 5, 1920, when the government of Soviet Azerbaijan published its decree on the nationalization of the land. It stated: "From now on, private ownership of land in the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic is abolished once and for all. All the land of khans, beks and landowners, as well as all land belonging to monasteries, churches and mosques with their live-stock and tools shall immediately become the property of the working people, without any compensation (either direct or indirect)."

All in all, the peasants received 1.4 million hectares of land and were freed from the payment of annual rent for their land. No less important for the peasants was the decree issued ten days later nationalizing the forests, waters and mineral wealth.

In November 1920, Lenin signed the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the revival of cotton-growing in Central Asia and Azerbaijan. In April 1921, Lenin pointed to the need "to push forward irrigation in Azerbaijan..., in order to expand agriculture and cattle-breeding."

For that purpose 800,000 roubles was made available. That does not seem much today, compared with the almost 2,000 million roubles earmarked for the republic's agricultural development in the 10th five-year plan period (1976-1980). But in the twenties, that money enabled the republic's farmers to get down to building irrigation systems, begin land improvement work and buy their first tractors.

A glance at an agricultural map of Azerbaijan will reveal many projects that were started thanks to those 800,000 roubles: several big canals and reservoirs, and a drainage system on much of the land in the valleys of the Kura and Araks rivers for drawing off the water used to wash the saline soil. Today, citrus fruit, tea and saffron are grown in addition to the traditional crops, such as wheat, cotton, tobacco, vegetables, grapes, melon crops and nuts.

May the Mountain of Cotton Rise to the Skies!

Cotton has become Azerbaijan's main crop. The words "May the mountain of cotton rise to the skies" belong to Sevil Kaziyeva, the first girl to operate a cotton-picking machine, whose example has fired thousands of young people in the villages to do the same.

Her life provides an excellent illustration of what was happening in the villages of Azerbaijan in the fifties when cotton-picking machines first appeared there. State Farm No. 5 of the Zhdanov District is one of the biggest cotton farms in the republic. Sevil worked on the farm, picking the cotton by hand. One day, after she had picked three times the norm, the management wanted to put her at the head of a team, but she refused. Instead, she requested to be sent to the courses for machine operators because, as she put it, "I believe the future of cotton in the republic lies with machine-picking."

The director of the state farm, Akhmed Aliyev, told the 18-year-old Sevil:

"There seems to be no reason to refuse your request. The only thing is that not only in our Zhdanov District, but in the whole of Azerbaijan, machines are operated by men." The old cotton-grower looked at the serious face of the young girl before him and suddenly decided:

"Go ahead! You are a determined and independent girl. If you make the grade, you will operate a cotton-picking machine, if not, then you go back to picking cotton the way your grandmother and great-grandmother did."

For a whole year Sevil studied at the school for machine operators, and returned with a diploma. That first autumn, she brought in more cotton with her harvester than many of the men did. Encouraged by her success, she called on the girls of Azerbaijan to follow her example and become machine operators.

Today, there are already hundreds of girls in Azerbaijan who operate cotton-picking machines.

Rock drawings made more than 10,000 years ago have been found in Kobustan, south of Apsheron.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of the young and the experience of older farmers, the republic is increasing its cotton production from year to year. In 1976, at the beginning of the 10th five-year plan period, the republic brought in 520,000 tons of cotton; in 1980, its output already exceeded 850,000 tons.

Saghi, a Glass of Wine!

So cotton has now become Azerbaijan's main crop. But what about grapes? In the past few years, they have been a very close second in Azerbaijan's agricultural output.

Grape-growing and wine-making have been an integral part of Azerbaijan's life throughout the centuries. Numerous archeological excavations have unearthed jars, goblets and cups. The names of many villages in Azerbaijan are also connected with the vineyards. There are three such villages in the vicinity of Shemakha, the ancient capital of Azerbaijan: Maisari—"the best wine"; Matrasa—"the school of wine-making"; and Saghiyan—"the cup-bearer" (remember Omar Khayyam's "Saghi, a glass of wine!").

Azerbaijan is the home of the famous Matrasa grapes which are excellent for making both dry and fortified wines. One kilogramme of these grapes gives as much as 700 grammes of must.

The people from the mountain village of Bayan have developed another variety of grapes—Bayanshira—which yields up to 40 tons per hectare, and are ideal for the champagne type of wine.

What is the present situation in grape-growing? In 1976, the farmers sold the state 710,000 tons of grapes that went to 74 processing plants. The republic also supplied grapes for wine and brandy to distillers in the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Georgia and Armenia. In 1980, 1.4 million tons of grapes was delivered to the state. A good showing, but not the limit, as Azerbaijani grape-growers believe. There are plans to push the grape harvest in the republic up to 2-3 million tons a year in the next 10-15 years. That would make Azerbaijan the largest grape producer in the Soviet Union.

Vegetables for the Cities

Vegetables are an important part of Azerbaijan's agricultural production. They are grown throughout the republic, although the best yields are obtained in the subtropics of the Lenkoran Lowland in the south, in the area which is known as the "national vegetables supplier". Two crops are grown each year. The first crop, which is ready in April-May, is sent to the central parts of the country and the industrial centres of Siberia and the Far North.

Azerbaijani farmers are anxious to make the best use of every inch of soil. We happened to be present at a meeting of a vegetable-growing team in the Lenkoran District. The discussion centred around boosting yields. The local *aksakal* (the name given in the East to revered elders), Khalyg Aliyev, was also at the meeting. Although he had been retired for some years, he was anxious to take part in the discussion.

"It's quite true that yields should be boosted," he told the meeting. "It is equally true that better use should be made of machinery and fertilizers, and efforts should also be made to increase the acreage."

"We'd be only too happy to," remarked a young agronomist, "but, as you know, the farm has no spare land at all."

"None?" queried the old man. "What about the irrigation canals?"

"You can't be serious!" the agronomist said, taken aback. "What would we do without irrigation?"

"I'm not suggesting doing away with them," the old man explained. "But if the water was confined in reinforced concrete pipes and they were covered with soil, we would have an extra 15-17 hectares for vegetables."

In the Azerbaijani subtropics the winter is short and mild, yet still not warm enough for certain crops. The plantations of tea and citrus fruit, for example, have to be covered with polyethylene film. Hothouses are used to germinate vegetable seedlings in the winter months for subsequent planting out. This cuts down sharply the growing time, and therefore enables the farmer to gather two crops a year. The republic now grows over 650,000 tons of vegetables a year.

Science to the Aid

Agriculture in Azerbaijan today is closely linked with science. There are quite a number of institutes researching into various aspects of farming: economics and management, cotton-growing, arable farming, horticulture, viticulture, the cultivation of subtropical plants, agrochemistry and soil science, vegetable growing, forestry, melioration, genetics and selection, silkworm-breeding, stock-breeding, veterinary science, mechanization and electrification, hydraulic engineering, irrigation and drainage. There are also experimental stations for different climatic zones.

After many years of research, Azerbaijani scientists have proved that it is possible to desalinate the soil to a depth of ten metres, without any danger of resalinization. The method of rapid washing, tested on big areas, has made it possible to obtain high and stable crop yields. The land experts have come to the conclusion that two drainage systems are required: one for washing, and the second to be used during the subsequent cultivation of the land.

Scientists have done particularly important work in the sphere of cotton-farming. Over the past sixty years they have several times introduced new strains of cotton with shorter growing seasons and higher yields. They have also worked out certain improvements in technology that would result in yields of 3-3.5 tons per hectare. Nor is that the limit, since quite a few farms are already getting 4 tons and more. Consequently, scientists are at present engaged in studying their experience, and, on this basis, developing methods for reaching such yields everywhere, irrespective of climatic and soil conditions.

Economists have completed a study of the most rational distribution and specialization of farm production for all climatic zones in Azerbaijan, with a detailed breakdown for each district and each collective and state farm.

Many highly skilled specialists work on the republic's farms today. Before Soviet government, 98 percent of the peasants were illiterate. Now there is no illiteracy and 80 percent of all managers of both collective and state farms, as well as section and team leaders, have a higher or secondary technical education.

More than 400 farmers have been awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labour, while Basti Bagirova and Shamama Gasanova have received this honour twice.

Closing the Gap between Town and Country

The state is investing very large sums in agriculture and, as part of its overall agricultural programme, is increasing the purchasing prices. There are farms in Azerbaijan which now make as much as 1,300-1,600 roubles' clear profit per hectare. Moreover, the wages of farm machine operators now differ very little from the wages of highly skilled industrial workers in towns.

We visited the home of Zamina Aslanova, leader of a team of cotton-growers from the Sabirabad District. It was a festive occasion, for Zamina had just been awarded a USSR State Prize for her achievements. And when something like that is celebrated, the whole village joins in.

Zamina heads a team of 18 who work on 52 hectares of cotton. They brought in 6.34 tons per hectare, and so, in addition to their wages, they netted almost 120,000 roubles.

"That," Zamina Aslanova told us, "was a record yield. But even when yields were slightly lower, the bonuses were good. We have no cause to grumble about our earnings," she added. "There isn't a single family in the village without a TV set, refrigerator and modern furniture. Six people are planning to buy cars this year in my team alone."

Some people find statistics boring, but figures very often speak louder than words. In the 10th five-year plan period Azerbaijani farmers put another 45,000 hectares to the plough, and improved another 150,000 hectares of irrigated land. Some of the irrigation systems were modernized, so that 300,000 hectares of land received more water. An area of 150,000 hectares was washed and 400,000 hectares of pasture land was watered.

Over the past five years, the farms of the republic

have received 17,500 tractors, 13,800 lorries, 11,500 tractor trailers, 2,800 grain harvesters, 1,600 excavators, 1,500 bulldozers, 290 mobile sprinkling units and 300 mobile pumping stations. The farms received about 6 million tons of fertilizer.

Between 1976 and 1980, almost 3 million square metres of housing space was built in the villages of Azerbaijan with modern conveniences equal to those in the cities. Work is now being completed on a new gas pipeline from Yevlakh to Stepanakert, Goris and Nakhichevan. It will mean additional amenities—heating and cooking facilities—for 800 villages. About 80 percent of the rural homes in Azerbaijan now have gas—twice as many as in 1975.

The state also provides the capital for the cultural development of the villages. The number of schools and boarding schools built in 1976-1980 is almost five times greater than in the previous five-year period. Many new palaces of culture, libraries and service establishments have been opened, new stadiums built, and parks and gardens laid out. Rural dwellers enjoy more and more of the services offered in towns.

In other words, one of the main tasks of the country's social development—that of bringing living standards in rural areas up to those in the towns—is being successfully resolved in Azerbaijan.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION—WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

Article 18 of the USSR Constitution says: "In the interests of the present and future generations, the necessary steps are taken in the USSR to protect and make scientific, rational use of the land and its mineral and water resources, and the plant and animal kingdoms, to preserve the purity of air and water, ensure reproduction of natural wealth, and improve the human environment."

We asked Gasan Aliyev, Member of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences and Chairman of the Environmental Protection Society of Azerbaijan, to comment on this article of the Constitution.

"Protection of the environment from pollution," he said, "has been enacted into law by the USSR Constitution and the Constitution of Azerbaijan. But it would be wrong to think that no measures were taken before to protect the environment and ensure the rational use of natural resources.

"As far as our republic is concerned, a 20-year comprehensive programme for protecting the environment was drawn up way back in 1957.

"I took part in its preparation and can state with satisfaction that, in the main, it has been accomplished. Thus, work has been done to register and recultivate land subject to erosion and salination. Several reservations have been founded, and a Red Book has been started in which all endangered and rare species of flora and fauna in Azerbaijan are recorded.

"Today, however, this is no longer enough. The past 25 years, justly described as years of rapid scientific and technical progress, have also been years of an 'ecological conflagration', as scientists of industrially developed countries call it. The 'conflagration' was caused by the intensity of man's economic activity, which had not always received proper consideration. Quite naturally, legislators had to think of enacting laws to protect the environment. The Soviet Union was the first country to make it a constitutional duty to protect the biosphere from pollution."

The sum earmarked for the construction of a modern and effective sewerage system in Baku amounts to 108 million roubles. From the engineering point of view, it is a complex project; its main purpose is not so much to dispose of the city's sewage as to ensure its mechanical and biological treatment. In other words, when the new sewerage system is completed, the danger of polluting the city and the Caspian Sea by sewage will be eliminated.

Perhaps the idea is best illustrated by two figures: the construction of the new urban sewage conduits will cost 26 million roubles, while the sewage disposal plant with its purification installations outside the city will cost 82.4 million roubles.

The ultimate aim is to ensure that all industrial waste as well as household sewage is treated and put to use. Some of the oil refineries have already switched over to the closed-cycle water supply system, and all refineries have effective purification systems.

Mention has been made of the Caspian Sea oil. But it should also be remembered that the Caspian Sea is probably the only place in the world where sturgeon is fished commercially.

Unfortunately, in the past not enough thought was given to the possible side-effects of off-shore oil drilling. The pollution of the Caspian Sea gradually increased, particularly in the vicinity of the oil rigs. Living conditions for the valuable species of fish deteriorated and they naturally ceased to breed.

The problem arose of how to raise oil production without polluting the sea and at the same time to increase the sturgeon population. This is a knotty problem and scientists have been working on it for

over 15 years. They firmly believe that the problem can and will be solved.

The use of explosives is forbidden in all parts of the Caspian. Nor can seismic methods be used for oil and gas prospecting. Effective measures have also been worked out to prevent pollution of the sea by the discharge of water from the oil rigs. All ships in the Caspian have been equipped with special purification systems.

Gasan Aliyev says on this score:

"The article in the Soviet Constitution on environmental protection has removed the contradiction between those who sought at all costs to protect the environment and those who, because of their ignorance of ecological laws, continued to pollute it. In other words, the Constitution spelled out very plainly the principle that the 'ecological conflagration' could be put out only if the entire Soviet people, and not only specialists, were involved. That means that every single person must know the basic facts of ecology.

"Not everyone yet has come to recognize this truth. At a recent lecture at an oil refinery in Baku, I was asked why everyone should know the basic facts of ecology if there are people at each enterprise whose job it is to see to such matters.

"To that I retorted: why should everyone bother with learning grammar when there are philologists who specialize in grammar? Without the knowledge of the basics of ecology it is today impossible to conduct any economic or even recreational activities without harming nature. Very often it is the neglect of seeming trifles that causes the harm."

Two examples in illustration. At one of the Baku oilfields, it was decided to pump the water that comes out with the oil back into the stratum. The arguments in favour were that the water would not pollute the oilfield and that money would be saved on its purification. Ecological experts, however, were quick to spot the false logic of this. They explained that the uncleansed water pumped back into the stratum might mix with the subterranean water, which is used by the Apsheron farmers for irrigation. The oil workers therefore had to purify the water before pumping it back.

Or take another example. At one collective farm

somebody decided that their reservoir would look better if weeping willows were planted around it. The farmers liked the idea, saying it would make their reservoir resemble Primorsky Boulevard in Baku. They got the saplings and planted them. But as time passed and the trees grew and flourished, they noticed that the level of the water in the reservoir was dropping. It turned out that, since this was a man-made reservoir without any springs to feed it, there was nothing to make up for the immense amount of water the willows drank. So the willows had to be replaced with poplars which are more natural to that part of the country.

But such mistakes are becoming increasingly rare, since much is being done in the republic to popularize the basics of ecology.

Last year alone, members of the republic's Environmental Society delivered about 2,000 lectures at factories, farms, schools and colleges. They organized hundreds of seminars and answered over 1,000 letters containing advice concerned with ecology. There are now 6,000 voluntary environmental inspectors, and 26 ecological departments function under the auspices of the People's Universities.

"We are now focusing," Gasan Aliyev continued, "on spreading ecological knowledge among the younger generation. Thousands of teenagers help in the forestries and take part in the annual "Operation Stork". Its purpose is to track down the nesting places of rare birds and breeding grounds of animals, to count their number and to report back to the biologists. Each year the republic stages a contest for nature lovers with questions on biology and environmental protection, as well as a photo exhibition on the same topic.

"For four years a special pavilion has been functioning on Primorsky Boulevard in Baku devoted to the flora and fauna of Azerbaijan. It could be described as an illustrated Red Book. More than two million people have already visited the pavilion.

"All this is very heartening", Gasan Aliyev said in conclusion, "but our ultimate aim is to ensure that the younger generation will always bear ecological factors in mind, and not just from time to time. It is true that ecology has been introduced in the curriculum of some departments of Azerbaijan colleges.

That, however, is not enough. It must be made compulsory in all colleges, vocational schools and especially general education schools. For children it should be an essential part of their curriculum as mathematics, geography, history, literature, physics or chemistry."

THE WOMEN OF AZERBAIJAN

"Women in Azerbaijan have equal rights with men."

(From Article 33 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR)

On one of the squares of Baku you can see the monument of a woman facing the sun and throwing off the *yashmak* that for centuries was the symbol of her enslavement.

When speaking in Baku in 1970 on the occasion of Azerbaijan's 50th anniversary, Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, summed the past up graphically: "You know very well what the accursed *yashmak* was for women... In effect, it differed little from prison bars, the only difference perhaps being that women had to wear the thing that fenced them off from the world."

Fate dealt two blows to old Ali Eyvazov, who lived in Hudat, one of Azerbaijan's district centres. The first blow fell twenty years ago when, disregarding his wishes, his daughter, Djeiran, went to study in Baku. It is true that when she returned with a teacher's diploma her father forgave her—he invited his friends to dinner, slaughtered a sheep and brought out the wine.

But fate had prepared another blow for him. His youngest daughter, 16-year-old Maral, refused to marry the man chosen for her by her parents and went to the big city in her sister's footsteps. From letters her parents knew that she was living with her sister, that she had taken a course for crane operators, and had enrolled at an evening engineering school.

Ali raged and fumed: "All this equality is nonsense!" Baghi, his wife, tried to calm him down: "Times are different now," she said. "We had to live behind the *yashmak,* and could not even write our own name. Now our girls get degrees and you won't shut them up in the home."

That conversation reminded us of many things. Of how, for example, when Soviet government came to Azerbaijan in 1920, it began slowly but surely to change the psychology of the Moslem women. And we thought of how deeply entrenched the prejudices against women were, so much so that, although they have now been overcome, they still make themselves felt from time to time.

We recalled the newsreels of the twenties that had recorded for posterity the first steps towards the emancipation of women in the republic. They showed classrooms with Moslem women sitting at the desks, all totally illiterate, but learning to read and write. Then there were women's clubs where teachers, doctors and lawyers gave lectures on the new Soviet laws. There were shots of a Russian woman worker teaching a young Moslem girl to operate her machine tool, and of a laboratory with a young girl working at a microscope.

Here is the story of a woman as an illustration.

That sunny day in 1928, when Izzet Orudjeva left her house with a bag full of books, she did not think that she would soon become a film star.

But her fate was decided the moment the well-known Azerbaijan playwright Djafar Djabarly saw her, because he had already spent months looking for someone to star in his film.

"He came up to me right in the street," Izzet Orudjeva recalled. "He introduced himself and invited me to the film studio for a screen test. I was offered the role of Sevil in his film.

"My parents were against the idea, and I myself couldn't make up my mind. I suppose the chains of tradition were still strong, although my family was progressive and I was in my first year at college. But it was not easy to decide to be the first film actress in the republic.

"The play was set in Azerbaijan in 1920. Sevil, an illiterate and terrified woman, forsaken by her husband, was desperate even to the point of contemplating suicide.

"But when Sevil learnt that the Soviet government just established in Azerbaijan had passed new laws allowing women to study, work and be independent, she threw off her *yashmak*, the symbol of woman's enslavement, and left to study in Moscow.

"I recalled the film in detail so that the younger generation could visualize what life was like half a century ago. Today any girl would jump at the chance to act in films. But at that time I was hesitant even though I agreed with Djabarly who said that to invite an actress of another nationality to play an Azerbaijani woman would be senseless. And in Azerbaijan there were no film actresses at that time.

"The film was a great success. I remember how girls and women who went to see it threw off their *yashmaks* and left the cinema with their faces uncovered. This happened in many towns and villages of the republic and not only in Baku.

"I realized that I was doing something very important for the women of Azerbaijan, and so, when I was offered a part in Djabarly's next film—*Almas*—on the same subject, I agreed at once. The reviews said that I had done a good job in both films, although I believe many Azerbaijani women could have done equally well, since they, too, were going through a period of social and spiritual emancipation at that time."

Izzet Orudjeva is no longer an actress. Today she is a Member of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, a State Prize winner, and the bearer of the Order of Lenin, the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, and the Badge of Merit.

When we asked why she gave up acting, she replied: "I never intended abandoning the profession of my choice. I wanted to be a chemist. For more than forty years I have been working at the Academy's Institute of Chemical Additives. I completed my doctorate and now head the laboratory developing additives for lubricants."

Izzet Orudjeva has 200 research projects to her credit, 22 inventor's certificates, and dozens of articles and books.

"My republic," she said, "is famed for its oil and all my work is connected with oil-refining, petrochemistry and engineering. Briefly this is the situation: modern engines require very high-grade

lubricants. Even those from our oil, which has a high quality, cannot ensure the optimal operation of these engines. So we began industrial production of special chemical additives. Lubricants with these additives prolong the service life of engines and improve their quality.

"A special problem is to find additives that will enable lubricants to be used in all climatic conditions. That is particularly important since the Soviet Union has so many different climatic zones—from the tundra to the subtropics with temperatures varying as much as 100 degrees. These additives for lubricants have been developed by scientists in conjunction with engineers and technicians working in the republic's chemical industry."

That is the story of just one woman, and there are many others just as interesting.

What, for instance, happened to Maral Eyvazova, the girl who went to Baku against her father's wishes and became a crane operator? She married. Her husband, Nadir Mamedov, works as a fitter at the same plant. They have two children; the elder boy, Rafik, is in the second form at school, and the younger, Nazim, has not yet started school.

"Why did you choose such a traditionally man's job?" we asked Maral.

"Probably because we girls of Azerbaijan whose grandmothers had been nothing more than household slaves, were quite determined to be equal with men in all fields and to cope with jobs that only men had done before. So we became pilots, tractor drivers, operators, sea captains and oil engineers. That was something unknown in Azerbaijan's history.

"I was no exception. When I came to the plant. I was offered jobs traditionally held by women. I insisted on learning to operate a crane, and I've been operating one for many years now. I have also finished an evening technical school."

"And you were never tempted to change your job?"

"No, I like my job. I studied because now you can't get far without an education. Technology is constantly advancing, and practical experience is no longer enough. Today I am a top-class crane operator."

"In that case, Maral, would you mind answering another question? Do you find it hard to combine work at the plant with bringing up your sons? Women the world over are complaining nowadays that work takes up too much of their time—little is left for the family."

"I can understand them well and I think I could not have coped on my own. But, fortunately, we can rely on the plant's nursery and kindergarten. My elder son started school well-prepared. He had been taught to read, write and draw at the kindergarten, so school was no hardship.

"No less important is the fact that we pay only one-quarter of the kindergarten's costs, the rest being paid by the state. And it is quite a sum. The maintenance of one child at the kindergarten costs the state about 500 roubles a year and at the nursery even more."

Not from any feeling of male solidarity we asked her husband Nadir what was his reaction to the loss of his position as head of the family and to his new one of his wife's helper.

"I regard it as natural," he replied, "even though there had been a 'male cult' in the Caucasus for centuries. We work at the same plant. I know all the difficulties that Maral faces and try to help her. On my way home I take Nazim from the nursery. I do the shopping, go to the laundry and do many things in the house. And I teach the boys to do the same".

The lives of two women are different, yet basically the same.

About one million women now work in Azerbaijan's national economy and they make up almost half the labour force. In a republic with a total population of six million, there are almost 40,000 women studying in higher educational establishments. Women make up 63 percent of all doctors, 59 percent of teachers and other staff in cultural institutions, and 44 percent of all scientists. Almost 40 percent of the members of the Azerbaijan parliament—the Supreme Soviet—are women.

Stretching across the northern part of Azerbaijan are the mountain ranges of the Greater Caucasus.

RELIGION IN AZERBAIJAN

"Citizens of the Azerbaijan SSR are equal before the law irrespective of ... attitude to religion..."

(From Article 32 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR)

Towering over one of the old districts of Baku are the dome and minarets of the Taza-Pir Mosque, a marvel of Oriental architecture built at the end of the last century. It is the biggest Shiite mosque in the USSR and one of the biggest in the Moslem world. During Islam feasts or periods of mourning, up to ten thousand people can gather in the mosque and the adjoining square.

We went to the Taza-Pir on an ordinary day, when there were few people around and we could examine it in peace. It has a beautiful pulpit (munbar), the paintings on the walls and ceiling are a marvel to look at, and the floor is covered with hand-woven Azerbaijani carpets. Everything gives the impression of excellent taste and richness, while the well-lighted dome creates an impression of grandeur and solidity.

In March, 1978, the Convention of Representatives of the Islamic Communities of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia elected a new Chairman of the Moslem Board of the Transcaucasus. He is 74-year old Hadji Mir Kazanfar Mir Alekper ogly Ibraghimov, Shaykh-ul-Islam. His residence is next to the Taza-Pir Mosque and we took the opportunity to call on him.

Religious affairs occupy six days of his week. Only on Sundays does Hadji Mir Kazanfar Ibraghimov allow himself a respite. He spends the day at home with his family, receives guests, or sits for hours in his library reading the Koran and other religious books. Hadji Mir Kazanfar Ibraghimov also likes Oriental poetry.

His favourites are Nizami, Fizuli, Saadi and Vurgun. He also enjoys conversations with his friends over a cup of strong Azerbaijani tea.

"In the many years I have served Allah," he told us, "no one has ever tried to restrict me in any way. I am quite free to serve Allah and carry his teachings to the people, and so I am absolutely happy."

Islam is not the only religion in Azerbaijan. The Orthodox, Judaist, Baptist and Gregorian religions are also practiced. We invited members of the different churches to take part in something like a round-table conference. Our guests included a member of the Moslem Board of the Transcaucasus, Allashukyur Pashayev, the Dean of the Russian Orthodox Church of Azerbaijan, Archpriest Dmitri Ivanov, and the Presbyter of the Baku Baptist Community Pavel Samotayev.

Our first question was addressed to Allashukyur, who at the age of 30 had already risen high in the Islamic hierarchy. "Could you please tell us something about your career?"

"There's nothing spectacular about it," he replied. "I finished the Bukhara Madrasah, then carried on my studies at the Tashkent Higher Theological School. The church, like any secular body, prizes people with a higher education, and that probably explains my swift promotion."

"You probably come from a religious family?"

"No. I was the only one of the 11 children in the family to receive a religious education. All the other have secular professions. My brother is a civil engineer, and among my nine sisters there are doctors, teachers, farm experts and workers. I realize that, with this background, my choice might seem surprising but when any amazement is expressed I always reply that the church is my vocation. I personally see nothing surprising in this, my vocation is the church, just as others have a vocation for mathematics, physics or music.

"As a child I first became acquainted with religious literature in the home of the village mullah. At first it was just the curiosity of a child, but later I decided to learn more about Islam. And with knowledge came a deep faith in Allah..."

"Did you have any difficulty in getting a religious education?"

"If you mean did I find learning hard, the answer is yes. But if you mean whether my parents, brother and sisters tried to dissuade me and oppose me, or whether there was any hindrance on the part of the authorities, the answer is no. My own wishes were the deciding factor."

"You work right next to the biggest Shiite mosque in the USSR, so probably you are best equipped to judge the number of Moslems in the republic."

"The mosques keep no such statistics," he replied, "because Islam does not require obligatory attendance from its followers. Many perform the religious rites at home. We only note the numbers during religious holidays and periods of mourning. For instance, 25,000 people visited the mosques of Azerbaijan during the Magarram period of mourning."

"Do Azerbaijani Moslems maintain ties with Moslems in other countries?"

"Oh, yes, and many of our Moslems have in the past few years made pilgrimages to such holy places as Mecca, Medina, Meshed and Kerbela. I personally have made such pilgrimages. Each year quite a number of delegations of Moslems come to Azerbaijan from Africa, Asia and the Arab states.

"Another important link between the Moslems of Azerbaijan and other countries is their participation in all the international actions of the Church connected with the struggle for peace and with strengthening friendship among nations."

We began our conversation with Archpriest Dmitri Ivanov, with the same question: "Are there many Orthodox believers in Azerbaijan?"

"Like Allashukyur Pashayev," he replied, "I cannot give any exact figures, since such statistics are not compiled by our Church. It, too, does not consider church attendance obligatory. But I would not be telling the truth if I said we make no estimates. For instance, I could say that, at the church where I work, about 10,000 people requested various church ceremonies last year: christenings, weddings and funeral services. More than 12,000 attended confession. On the whole, it is the older

generation that goes to church, but on church holidays the numbers greatly increase. At the Easter service this year, there were more than 5,000 people—both in the church and outside it. There were quite a number of young people among them. I would not say that they were all believers—they just wanted to see the Easter service which is a very impressive one. I have worked in the church for 28 years, but even I never fail to admire the beauty and solemnity of this occasion.

"The activity and number of believers can also be judged from the fact that we have no shortage of funds donated by believers. Although donations are increasing this does not necessarily mean that the number of believers is growing. It could equally well be that, since people are now better off, they give the church more."

"Have your children followed in your footsteps?"

"No, my daughter, Natalya, graduated from the Department of Applied Mathematics at the Azerbaijan State University and now works as a computer programmer. My son, Sergei, graduated from the Moscow Aviation Institute. That does not distress me, however. Belief in God is not something that can be imposed, even by parental authority. It is a matter each person has to decide for himself. Incidentally, my own decision to serve God did not come straight away. When I finished school I went to a teachers' training college to study mathematics. It was only the war when I lost my parents and was feeling desperate that turned me to God. I first went to study at a theological seminary and then at the Leningrad Theological Academy, where I worked for a degree in theology."

"Does the Orthodox Church in Baku have any complaints against the authorities or representatives of other religions?"

"None, because the authorities meet all our requests. As for representatives of other religions, we build our relations with them on the basis of ecumenical brotherhood. For many years now the believers of all faiths in Azerbaijan have lived in peace and concord."

Our question to the Presbyter of the Baptist Community, Pavel Samotayev, was: "Could you

explain why there are so many different sects in Azerbaijan—Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Dukhobors and Molokans, to mention just a few?"

"The Orthodox Church," he replied, "appeared in Azerbaijan at the turn of the century, when, with the development of the oilfields, many workers came from Central Russia. The different sects, on the other hand, were much earlier arrivals. And they came not in search of jobs, but to save themselves from persecution.

"In the Russian Empire, only the Orthodox Church enjoyed the official support of the authorities, and all other churches were persecuted and victimized. This policy was spelled out very frankly by Pobedonostsev, who headed the Holy Synod in Tsarist Russia. He once said, 'The state recognizes only one religion as the only true one among the many existing ones. It supports it and gives it its patronage to the prejudice of all other churches and beliefs.'

"The absence of freedom of conscience affected the members of the various sects most of all. The entire state machinery, the police included, was used to persecute them. They were imprisoned and exiled to remote parts of the Empire. Many of them fled from the central regions to escape persecution and some of them settled in Azerbaijan.

"Under Soviet government, they have attained peace and the opportunity to practice their faith freely.

"Soviet laws on religion are founded on the views expressed by Lenin, who always insisted that 'Everyone must be absolutely free to profess any religion he pleases, or no religion whatever, i.e., to be an atheist... Discrimination among citizens on account of their religious convictions is wholly intolerable. Even the bare mention of a citizen's religion in official documents should unquestionably be eliminated.'"

When we called on the Shaykh-ul-Islam, Hadji Mir Kazanfar Ibraghimov, he remarked: "Believers come to me not only for explanation of *suras* of the Koran but also for advice and to talk about life in general. They come with their difficulties, and to share their achievements. Such is life. But throughout all the fifty-odd years I have served the Allah no one has come to complain of discrimination at their place of

work on religious grounds. No one has said that he or she is being deprived of any social privileges or humiliated by atheists or other believers."

Hadji Mir Kazanfar Ibraghimov apologized for terminating our visit, as the time had come for the *namaz* (prayer), and from the minarets of the Taza-Pir Mosque we could hear the voice of the muezzin.

SCIENCE AND CULTURE: PAST TRADITIONS AND THE PRESENT

Shovket Mamedova, People's Artist of the USSR, whose name is connected with much that exists today in Azerbaijani opera, recalled:

"To this day I treasure a playbill given to me by Gusein-Arablinski, one of the founders of the Azerbaijani theatre. The bill appeared on the streets of Baku in the summer of 1874.

It announced the performance by students of a technical school of the play *The Vizier of the Lenkoran Khanate* by the Azerbaijani writer, philosopher and educationalist, Mirza Fatali Akhundov.

The amateur company grew with time and gave performances not only in Baku, but also in other Azerbaijani towns—Kuba, Shusha, Nakhichevan and Sheki. This first group of enthusiasts gradually became the focal point for the progressive intellectuals of that time. But the Azerbaijani theatre still remained an amateur affair—it had no money, no premises and existed on donations from various patrons.

"I should like to cite my own case as an example," continued Shovket. "In 1911 the oil magnate, Taghiyev, who had heard me sing and liked my voice sent me on a scholarship to study in Italy. That was a piece of luck I could have only dreamt of. But it did not last long. A year later he stopped paying me the scholarship and I had to return home. It was only in Soviet years that I completed my education.

"The Azerbaijani theatre's path was a very hard one. Tragedy befell many of its actors. Zeinalov, for instance, died in abject poverty,

Alvendi became mentally ill, and such outstanding actors as Alikuli Gamgyusar and Arablinski were murdered by religious fanatics. But even worse was the fate of Azerbaijani actresses. I myself, for instance, was almost stoned by a crowd of fanatics. At that time women's roles were played by men or by guest actresses of other nationalities."

And that was in a land that had given the world many great poets and philosophers. History has recorded the names of many who brought fame and glory to science, the arts and the literature of the Azerbaijani people. When speaking of today, mention must be made of the past. That is one of the customs of the East—to begin with those who came before you.

Reviewing the Past

Historians tell us that the first schools appeared on the territory of Azerbaijan in the 5th century. They were elementary Christian schools. This education system existed until the Arab invasion of the 7th century, when, with the spread of Islam, the schools became Moslem madrasahs.

The madrasah provided a higher education, but it was above all a religious education. Nevertheless, the emergence of an education system in those distant days had immense significance for education in general and the advance of scientific thought, because, apart from religious subjects, there were also such secular subjects as astronomy, mathematics, logic, philosophy and medicine. As early as the 12th century, Shemakha, then the biggest cultural and economic centre in Azerbaijan, boasted a fine medical school. Physicians were trained there under the guidance of Kafi-ed-din Omar-ibn-Osman, who was famous throughout the East. He and his pupils did a great deal in studying the medicinal properties of herbs, describing these properties in their numerous works and using them in their medical practice.

But probably the most famous of all was the observatory in Maraga (Nakhichevan), founded in the 13th century. Historians recorded that it was equipped with instruments unique for those times. A big group of astronomers worked at the observatory,

leaving for posterity priceless manuscripts describing their observations and containing accurate maps of the stars and astronomical tables.

Few people know that way back in the 14th century a real university—Dar-esh-Shafa—functioned successfully in Azerbaijan. Hundreds of students attended the university and lectures were read there by dozens of prominent Azerbaijani scholars, as well as by scholars from others lands, such as India, Iran, China, Syria, Egypt and Central Asia. The scholars were attracted from other lands by the opportunities offered in Azerbaijan to carry on their scientific studies. Numerous schools and medical and scientific institutions, including a big observatory, were centred around Dar-esh-Shafa. The university library contained 60,000 manuscripts. In effect, it was a scientific township in which philosophers, mathematicians, astronomers, physicians and historians lived and worked.

Religious teachings, of course, took precedence over all else. But looking back to those distant times from the heights of the 20th century, one can only admire the persistent efforts of our forefathers to understand the world that surrounded them and to advance mankind's knowledge.

There can be no doubt that, had conditions been more favourable in the 14th-17th centuries, both science and education in Azerbaijan would have advanced to great heights. And who knows what discoveries could have been made?

But fate had placed Azerbaijan on the crossroads of Europe and Asia, and that determined its destiny. Many wars broke out on its territory before, in the first half of the 19th century, Azerbaijan joined its great northern neighbour—Russia—and acquired peace and a reliable support.

From the Past to the Present

The contact with Russian culture and the revolutionary movement in Russia that ensued was of immense significance for the Azerbaijani people. But the Russia of Pushkin and revolutionary democrats, the Russia of Lobachevski, Pavlov, Mendeleyev and Tolstoi was also the Russia of the Tsars who could

not care less for the development of their outlying, semi-colonial areas. By 1855, only 8 Russian schools had been opened in Azerbaijan. And it was only towards the end of the century, under pressure from the progressive public and after numerous delays, that mixed schools where Russians and Moslems could study together were opened. Before the revolution, Azerbaijan had something like 1,000 schools, including both technical and classical schools. But only 31 percent of their pupils came from the local population.

Progressives and intellectuals in Azerbaijan always fought for the education of the people. In this they had the support of revolutionary and progressive Russia.

One of their greatest achievements in this field was the opening of the Baku University. Its first rector was Professor V. I. Razumovski, a progressive Russian scientist and surgeon. At the opening ceremony he said: "Azerbaijan now has its own centre of higher education... A new light has appeared on the border between Europe and Asia."

When Soviet government was formed in Azerbaijan, it set up a People's Commissariat of Education. Its first head, Dadash Buniat-zade, was quick to count that there were no more than 100 people with a higher education in the republic.

Today, the republic has something like 4,500 schools, both seven-year and secondary, with almost 1.5 million pupils. It also has more than 100 students for every 10,000 of its population. Not a figure to be ignored by any count.

We have already mentioned the ancient Azerbaijani observatory in Maraga. Modern astronomical science is represented by the Shemakha Astrophysical Observatory. It provides a graphic example of the fruitful cooperation of scientists from the Union republics and other socialist countries. The observatory is headed by Gadjibek Sultanov, member of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences.

The pride of the observatory is the highly sensitive 2-metre telescope made by the Carl Zeiss Plant in Jena, the German Democratic Republic. Working in collaboration with their colleagues from the GDR Soviet astronomers have obtained some exceedingly interesting results in their studies of magnetic stars.

The planets are kept under regular observation and the astronomers have obtained excellent spectra of Mars that have helped to investigate some features of its atmosphere and surface.

The Shemakha Observatory also conducts observations connected with the space programme. Its studies of the structure and evolution of the small planets are of particular significance. Azerbaijani astronomers have evolved and mathematically substantiated the theory of the possible formation of asteroids as a result of the repeated disintegration of several big primary bodies.

It would be impossible to list all the work of Azerbaijani scientists today—of physicists, philosophers, mathematicians, geologists, historians and literary critics. Many deserve special mention. But one thing should be noted. Azerbaijani scientists concentrate not only on purely theoretical works, but regard it their first duty to promote the rapid advance of scientific and technical progress, to ensure high rates of growth of industry and to strengthen the economy of the republic.

Azerbaijan's present scientific base comprises more than thirty institutes of its Academy of Sciences, which is headed by Gasan Abdullayev, an outstanding scientist and Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The institutes have a scientific staff of more than 18,000, 73 percent of them being native Azerbaijanis. They include about 100 Members and Corresponding Members of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, more than 700 people with the Doctor of Science and 6,000 with the Candidate of Science degrees.

From Nizami to Vurgun

The history of Azerbaijani literature goes back for many centuries. When we look back on it today, we shall see five major figures, reflecting the various periods in the history of the nation.

First and foremost among them is Nizami—the genius of the 12th century, poet, philosopher and educationalist. World fame came to him with his *Khamsa* /Quintuple/ that included five romantic poems *Storehouse of Mysteries, Khosrau and Shirin,*

Laila and Majnun, Seven Beauties and *Iskandar Namah*. This epic masterpiece consists of 30,000 two-line verses. Its style, philosophy and ideas were destined to have an immense influence on the development of Oriental poetry.

At a time of devastating invasions, harsh oppression by foreign conquerors, and the fanaticism and bigotry common to the Middle Ages, Nizami's poetry stood out as an appeal for humanism, patriotism and a condemnation of the arbitrary rule and despotism of the feudal lords.

In 1947, the 800th anniversary of the birth of Nizami Gyandjavi was marked throughout the Soviet Union. His works have been translated into many languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union and other countries. The monument to Nizami, with scenes from his poems on the pedestal, stands today in Baku next to the Museum of National Literature and Language.

Between the 14th and 18th centuries, Azerbaijani literature produced many great poets: Imadeddin Nasimi, Muhamed Fizuli, and Molla Panakh Vaghif. The most brilliant among them all was undoubtedly Muhamed Fizuli, a man with an encyclopaedic education. He studied Greek and Arab philosophy, astronomy, mathematics and medicine, fluently spoke many Oriental languages, and knew perfectly the works of the Azerbaijani classics Nizami, Hagani and Nasimi.

He gained great popularity in his lifetime as the author of three volumes of poetry in the Azerbaijani, Persian and Arab languages, the poem *Laila and Majnun*—a hymn to love and faithfulness—and the philosophical treatise *Matlaul-Itikad* (To the Heights of Conviction).

Fizuli widened the themes covered by Azerbaijani poetry, lent it fuller content and improved its artistic form. The final establishment of the Azerbaijani literary language is connected with his name.

In the 19th century, Azerbaijani literature constantly felt the influence of Russian and West European literature, although it always preserved its national character. This influence brought in new ideas, new genres and the beginnings of revolutionary romanticism and critical realism.

The most outstanding Azerbaijani writers of the

19th century were Mirza Fatali Akhundov and Mirza Alekper Tairzade Sabir. The ideas of critical realism were particularly outspoken and revolutionary in the poetry of the latter.

At the time of the first Russian revolution (1905-07), Sabir was working in Baku as a teacher. The revolutionary events influenced his works radically, and he turned from poetry to satire, exposing social injustice, bigotry and religious fanaticism. He became a regular contributor to the satirical magazine *Molla Nasreddin* published by progressive writers and artists.

In his poetry Sabir called for revolutionary action. A complete collection of his works was published a year after his death. In Soviet Azerbaijan his poems have been published many times; they have been translated into the languages of other nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Union and into Persian. A monument to Sabir has been erected in Baku, and schools, libraries and educational centres in the republic have been named after him.

In Soviet times Azerbaijan has produced a whole galaxy of talented writers, poets, and playwrights—Djafar Djabarly, Rasul Rza, Suleiman Rustam, Mikhail Mushfik, Mamed Raghim, Mekhti Gusein, and Mirza Ibraghimov. Special mention should be made of Djafar Djabarly, the founder of Soviet Azerbaijani drama. So realistic were his characters that audiences often identified themselves with them.

Djabarly's sense of period was perfect. His plays *The Bride of the Fire, 1905, Sevil, Almas* and *Yashar* trace each major period in the life of the young Soviet republic: industrialization in the towns, collectivization in the countryside, the emancipation of Azerbaijani women, and the growth of a national and internationalist consciousness among the people.

Soviet literature reflected all the historic events in the life of the USSR and that of the republic—the revolutionary years, the first five-year plans, the building of socialism, the war against fascism, the postwar rehabilitation and, finally, the more recent scientific and technological revolution. Each period produced its heroes who became the inspiration for subsequent books.

The writer who came to the fore in these years as the proponent of socialist realism, was Samed

Vurgun, poet and playwright and Member of the republic's Academy of Sciences.

His first significant work was *The Komsomol Poem* dedicated to the young who fought for Soviet government and built socialism. The writer was inspired by their loyalty to their country and to Lenin's behests, and by their internationalism.

Later he showed himself to be a talented playwright. He wrote three plays one after the other: *Vaghif, Khanlar,* and *Khosrov and Shirin.* They describe different periods in the history of Azerbaijan, but the keynote common to them all is patriotism.

A special place in Vurgun's works is held by his poems dedicated to Lenin—*Lenin Lives, Reading Lenin,* and *Greetings to Our Leader.*

Samed Vurgun has also worked very fruitfully in the field of translation and has brought the works of many Russian and Soviet poets to the Azerbaijani reader.

Azerbaijani literature cherishes and enriches its national traditions, while developing in close contact with the literature of other Soviet nationalities and constantly drawing on the progressive culture of other peoples. Therein lies the guarantee of its further development.

The World of National Music

We began this chapter with the story of the old theatrical playbill treasured by Shovket Mamedova. Another bill could be regarded as the starting point for the story of music in Azerbaijan.

That bill appeared on the streets of Baku on January 12, 1908, and announced that an amateur Moslem theatrical group was presenting the opera *Laila and Majnun.* The music for the opera based on the poem by Muhamed Fizuli was written by the composer Uzeir Gadjibekov.

The composer turned for inspiration to the folk music of his people—to the songs of the folk-singers that had been passed on from generation to generation. They sang about the popular heroes—the freedom-loving, honest, noble, courageous and kind men of old. These songs are a treasure-trove for Azerbaijani national opera.

After *Laila and Majnun* Gadjibekov wrote several more works based on folk melodies and Oriental poetry.

A classical example of Azerbaijani opera is *Ker Ogly,* written in Soviet years. It is rich in beautiful arias, choruses and captivating dances. It was first staged on April 30, 1937, with the composer conducting, and ever since has ranked among the classics of Soviet opera.

An Azerbaijani national school of composers developed in Soviet years. It includes Kara Karayev, Fikret Amirov, Niyazi, Seid Rustamov, Djangir Djangirov and Arif Melikov.

Kara Karayev's ballets, *The Seven Beauties* and *The Path of Thunder,* have been a success both in this country and abroad. The composer's symphonic works are also widely known.

Fikret Amirov chose a different type of music—symphonic *mugams* which are a form of folk music.

"Mugams", he explained, "are for the most part founded on lyrical themes, with many different variations; they can be dramatic or placid. I decided to cloak them in the richness of symphonic sounds, to show how the *mugams* would look through a magnifying glass, as it were."

Amirov's first symphonic *mugams* were based on the classical folk ones *Shur* and *Kyurd-ovshary.* They were not confined to the Soviet Union and were played by some of the largest symphony orchestras in the world, for example, the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.

The younger composers—Arif Melikov, Faradj Karayev, Hayam Mirza-zade and others—have also been brought up in the traditions of folk music.

The Azerbaijani ballet school is a blend of traditional national dances and the achievements of classical Russian and Soviet ballet. The ballet company of the Azerbaijani State Opera and Ballet Theatre was awarded a diploma at the 7th International Dance Festival in Paris. The republic trains its own ballet dancers at the ballet school in Baku. Its graduates include the People's Artist of the USSR, Laila Vekilova, People's Artists of the republic, Maksud Mamedov and Rafiga Akhundova, and soloists Vladimir Pletnev and Tamilla Shiraliyeva.

They have danced many times on the stages of Moscow, Leningrad, Cairo, Warsaw, Delhi and Havana.

The well-known Azerbaijani ballerina, Gamer Almas-zade, set up the first Iraqi national ballet company in Baghdad. The violinist Seyran Ganiyev worked for many years in Cairo, while conductor Niyazi has been a frequent visitor to Istanbul, where he staged several operas. Rafiga Akhundova and Maksud Mamedov are now working in Algeria.

These names may be unfamiliar to you for the world is a big place and there are many talented people. But should you ever come to the Soviet Union, even for only one day, do make a point of finding the time to listen to Muslim Magomayev, People's Artist of the USSR and an extremely popular singer. Muslim also comes from Baku.

Craftsmen

There is a saying in the Caucasus that a nation's soul is unveiled in song. The people of Azerbaijan like to sing and they sing well. You do not have to visit the concert halls of Baku or Kirovabad to find that out. It would be sufficient to take a look at the colourful patterns of Azerbaijani carpets, the graceful lines of the articles made by copperplate engravers, potters, jewellers and, finally, painters—they all seem to sing.

Not for nothing was a large group of Azerbaijani craftsmen admitted to membership of the USSR Artists' Union. The group included embroiderers, pottery-makers, joiners and carpet-weavers.

The work of Azerbaijani craftsmen won universal recognition a long time ago. The colourful and unusually durable carpets attracted the attention of the first Europeans who visited the Caucasus. As for the beautiful necklaces and other jewellery made by Azerbaijani craftsmen, they have been displayed with great success at international exhibitions and fairs.

As in other parts of the Soviet Union, it is the state in Azerbaijan that helps to preserve and develop the ancient crafts. Cooperatives and factories are set up in traditional carpet-weaving areas. In many villages the state provides the looms and

materials for the weavers to work at home. In Baku, Kirovabad, Sheki and other places where crafts have flourished over the centuries, the craftsmen are provided with tools of their trade and materials. Their produce never stays long in the shops but is eagerly bought by the people of Azerbaijan and visitors alike.

The craftsmen also fulfill orders from the state, and are paid well for such work. They also work for exhibitions, the Ministry of Culture, museums and unions of workers in the arts of the republic.

It was only thanks to this attention to the crafts that it proved possible to revive many old ones that had been thought lost. A case in point is that of *shebekeh*—the art of binding wooden pieces together without glue or nails. This art was an integral part of ancient Oriental architecture. Ashraf Rasulov, a master of *shebekeh,* from Sheki has helped to restore many precious monuments of ancient Azerbaijani architecture. He worked for several years on the restoration of the Palace of the Sheki Khans, or, to be more exact, on restoring the wooden lattices in the windows. That was a job that could not be done in haste, because first he had to reproduce the *shebekeh* patterns typical for the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries. Ashraf Rasulov was taught the trade by his father, and, in turn, he is now teaching it to his son and 12 other boys in his workshop.

Another Sheki craftsman, the potter Sheyub Mamedov, is also teaching youngsters. In his workshop you will find samples of all the pottery ever made in Azerbaijan—wine jugs holding 700 litres, tiny cups in which the national dish—*piti*—is served, small amphoras no less graceful than the ancient ones, and amusing money-boxes. All of them were made by Sheyub, and their main attraction perhaps lies in their uniqueness.

The government earmarks large sums each year for the development of the crafts. It also benefits from this in two ways—firstly, the old crafts live on, and, secondly, their sales bring in a handsome profit. Azerbaijani jewellery is gladly acquired by some of the best shops in Paris, London and Tokyo.

The carpet factories annually produce hundreds of different types of hand-woven carpets. In the 1976-79 period, the weavers produced more than 150,000

square metres of carpets. Their output will increase in the future as new factories are built and more young people taught the trade.

The pattern of an Azerbaijani carpet is always unique, it is tightly woven and has a surface like velvet. A weaver makes as many as 250,000 knots per square metre.

A small rug, a ceramic jar or an exquisite necklace are perfect souvenirs from Azerbaijan. And you will be doubly lucky if you acquire a souvenir signed by the craftsman himself.

He Paints the Working Man

Several years ago Soviet artists elected the Azerbaijani painter, Tair Salakhov, First Secretary of the Artists' Union.

Fame, it is said, often comes to an artist after his death, and only less often towards the end of his life. And it is exceedingly rare for an artist to win fame early in life.

Tair Salakhov was thirty when he graduated from the Surikov Arts Institute in Moscow. Five years later he was awarded the honorary title of People's Artist of Azerbaijan. At the age of 38, he was elected a Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Fine Arts and Secretary of the USSR Artists' Union. Today People's Artist of the USSR Tair Salakhov is fifty.

Many years ago Teymur Salakhov, a Baku office employee, noticed that his little son Tair preferred drawing to doing arithmetic. His notebooks were filled with drawings. Teymur took his son to the Young Pioneers' Palace. And there he started to study seriously. Adults who saw his drawings were amazed by his talent. The Baku Arts School offered him a place without entrance exams. It was forecast that he would go far.

As a promising young talent with the highest marks, he was sent to Moscow to continue his studies at the Surikov Arts Institute. His childhood dream had come true. You could say he was born under a lucky star. Perhaps, but many other prominent Azerbaijani artists—Mikail Abdullayev, Togrul Narimanbekov, and Sattar Bakhlul-zade—also studied in Moscow, Leningrad or Vilnius. Today,

too, the best arts schools of the country include talented youngsters from Azerbaijan.

Moscow gave Tair the knowledge an artist needs and taught him the secrets of his trade. But it was the artist himself who chose what he would paint.

When the time came for him to do his graduation paper, Tair went back to Baku and settled for a long time at Neftyaniye Kamni. It was there that he painted his first big canvas, *Back from the Shift,* which brought him fame. The painting showed off-shore oil workers on a usual working day standing on a bridge, battered by waves, with a piercing North wind howling around them, a day when the thoughts of those returning ashore remained with those still out at sea.

The artist seemed to have captured a typical scene, but he had also succeeded in conveying the heroism and romantic spirit of the men. He was to return to the same subject on several occasions later—in, for example, *Repairmen* and *In the Caspian Sea.* They all form a single story about the strong and courageous men. In doing so he developed his own distinctive style.

From the very beginning he was considered a painter of large tableaus with an original style. But, when in 1960 he painted a portrait of the composer Kara Karayev, people began to speak of him as a good portrait painter.

In 14 years of work, Salakhov has painted and drawn more than 200 works. But art experts and the public regard the above-mentioned canvases as his best. Three of them—*Repairmen, The Morning Train* and *The Portrait of Kara Karayev*—were shown at the Biennale-62 exhibition in Venice and were highly praised.

When Salakhov was asked what he believes to be the most important in a painter's work, he replied:

"If you are to remain true to your art, it is sometimes necessary to deviate from a blind copying of nature, and to get away from little details in order to present the whole properly. That is my creed—nothing but the truth. And another thing. In art it is necessary to find your own particular theme. If I have been lucky, then it was because I found my theme so quickly and without any hesitation—it is the working man.

THE LAST WORD

At the end of September, 1978, Azerbaijan rejoiced as its capital was awarded the Order of Lenin for its services to the revolutionary movement, to the establishment and consolidation of Soviet government in the republic, for its significant contribution to the victory over Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, and for its people's achievements in the field of economics and culture. Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CC CPSU, Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, came to Baku to present the award.

Speaking at the meeting in Baku at which he presented the award, Leonid Brezhnev said: "Azerbaijan is striding smartly ahead. In the 9th five-year plan period and in the first two years of the 10th five-year plan period, your industry has produced almost as much as it did in the previous 15 years."

The seventies were the best years in the republic's economic and social development. Whereas many capitalist countries experienced inflation, energy crisis and unemployment, there was an average annual industrial growth of 8.3 percent in Azerbaijan during this period, and the average yield of the main agricultural crops — cotton, grapes, vegetables, fruit, grain, and tea — increased by about 120 percent. The population's incomes increased thanks to the growth of the national income. Wages and salaries in towns increased by one-third and those in the countryside — by one half.

Azerbaijan is indeed moving rapidly ahead. Thousands of people visit the republic each year and we meet them with the hospitality traditional for our people. We show them our achievements, but also tell them that we have had to surmount great difficulties. And we stress thet what we have done is by no means the limit of what we shall yet do.

In this book we cited quite a number of figures illustrating the social and economic achievements of Azerbaijan, and we told you about some of our people. Tomorrow the picture will be different: today's schoolboy will become a student, today's team leader—a foreman, and today's young scientist—a professor. The record harvests and production records of today will become the accepted norm of tomorrow. And the republic itself will change, developing new characteristics and taking on new image.

Our belief in progress is not a dream of castles in Spain—it rests on the firm foundation of socialist planning.

Come to Azerbaijan when the 11th five-year plan (1981-1985) is well under way, and you will see the immense changes that will have taken place.

**Расим Гусейнович Агаев,
Валерий Григорьевич Григорьев**

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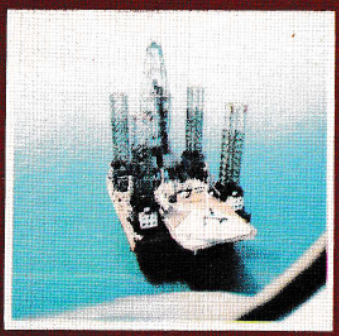

Modern cities, picturesque villages, oil derricks on land and at sea, large plants, power stations, motorways, cotton fields, tea plantations and vineyards, institutes, theatres and stadiums—this is how Azerbaijan looks today.